





**DOCUMENTS OF  
THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT  
IN INDIA**

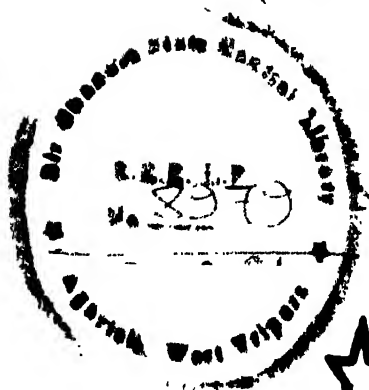


# DOCUMENTS OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN INDIA

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### **List Of Abbreviations Used**

<b>CI</b>	<b>: The Communist International.</b>
<b>ECCI</b>	<b>: The Executive Committee of the Communist International</b>
<b>CPI</b>	<b>: Communist Party of India</b>
<b>LM</b>	<b>: The Labour Monthly, published from London</b>
<b>CPGB</b>	<b>: Communist Party of Great Britain</b>
<b>CPSU</b>	<b>: Communist Party of Soviet Union</b>
<b>CPC</b>	<b>: Communist Party of China</b>
<b>INPRECOR</b>	<b>: International Press Correspondence of the Communist International</b>
<b>BCI</b>	<b>: Bulletin of the Communist International</b>
<b>CC</b>	<b>: Central Committee</b>
<b>PB</b>	<b>: Political Bureau</b>
<b>INC</b>	<b>: Indian National Congress</b>
<b>AITUC</b>	<b>: All India Trade Union Congress</b>
<b>AIWPP</b>	<b>: All India Workers' &amp; Peasants' Party</b>
<b>INTUC</b>	<b>: Indian National Trade Union Congress</b>
<b>AIKS</b>	<b>: All India Kisan Sabha</b>
<b>CKC</b>	<b>: Central Kisan Council of All India Kisan Sabha</b>
<b>WFTU</b>	<b>: World Federation of Trade Unions</b>
<b>AISF</b>	<b>: All India Students' Federation</b>
<b>CSP</b>	<b>: Congress Socialist Party</b>



## **Railway Strike And Our Task \***

Trembling before the coming strike of the railway workers, the Nehru government has struck at us and the workers by effecting arrests of hundreds of railway workers all over India.

This special concentration on the active workers and worker-leaders is an attempt to deprive the coming struggle of its most militant and determined leadership, coming straight from the ranks.

Simultaneously in close collaboration with the treacherous government, its fifth column, Jayaprakash Narayan and the gang of reformist traitors, has struck from within attempting to create confusion and disruption in the ranks of the workers, isolate the militant leadership and the workers under our influence and enabling the government to strike at them.

Jayaprakash's latest statement, in which he vaguely protests only against the arrest of workers belonging to unions affiliated to the All-India Railwaymen's Federation, is nothing but a call to the government to arrest only our people, members of unions under our influence and assure the government that he supports such arrests.

Though we had anticipated the treachery of Jayaprakash & Co., still because of deep-seated reformism inside the party, the fight against the treacherous policy of the socialist leaders has been halting and sometimes only formal. It is only recently that our party decided that strike of railway workers to protect their interests had to be led whether the AIRF leadership supported it or not.

In these circumstances the treachery of Jayaprakash no doubt creates difficulties in the way of a swift all-India action, for the socialist leaders continue to hold influence over large sections and confuse the ranks.

The question before the party is, therefore, how to meet this treachery and see that the full initiative of the workers is unleashed.

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*\*Party Circular issued on February 22, 1949*

## *2 Documents of The Communist Movement In India*

Of course there will be some at least in the party who will grow panicky at the opposition of the socialists, and especially at the repression launched by the government. They will be demoralised by the barrage of propaganda in the bourgeois press and advocate treachery, as the traitors and strike-breakers of the Benares DC have done. The recent resolutions of the PB have exposed that vacillations before struggle, panicky retreat before it, amounting to betrayal, constitute the main deviation inside the party. It is therefore quite possible and natural for these deviations to arise in one form or another on the eve of the strike. It must be understood by all comrades that such vacillations constitute nothing short of treachery to the cause of the railway workers; that those who show them have no place inside the party.

These vacillators will mask their treachery by talking about 'vanguardism'—as the Benares strike-breakers and traitors have done; or they will adopt some other slogan saying strike is not possible etc. and make use the bourgeois propaganda in the press which soon will start propagating that no strike is now possible.

With this warning against the vacillators in our own ranks, all our comrades, party organisations, all comrades working on the railway front must bend their efforts towards bringing about the strike.

Under what conditions do we have to carry on the strike? Firstly, under conditions in which the government has opened the frontal offensive against the railway workers—the precursor of the general offensive against the working class—the offensive of wage-cuts, mass-retrenchment—in short, the offensive to pass on the burdens of the capitalist crisis to the backs of the workers.

Our party members must clearly realise that the withdrawal of grain concessions is an open wage-cut, the first of the sorties which must inevitably follow in the absence of successful resistance. The government no longer seeks to negotiate, postpone or hold out hopes of better conditions. It openly demands surrender on the part of the workers and wants them to accept wage-cuts—reduction of the present standard of living. The government is out for a trial of strength with the workers and

out to defeat them. If it succeeds it will take further steps to intensify labour, carry out mass retrenchments and effect all those monstrous cuts which the capitalist exploiter requires.

Here, therefore, there is no room for parleying. Such parleyings mean betrayal. It means accepting the first wage-cut without a battle. In fact because of our lack of vigilance and socialist leaders' treachery the government has to a certain extent outwitted the workers. The strike should have begun on 1 January when concessions were withdrawn. It has been postponed, and the reformists and government were given time to disrupt the burning indignation. That was a very bad mistake but we have done our best to retrieve it now.

Not only the immediate future of the railway workers but the entire working class depends on the resistance the railway workers can offer. If the present offensive succeeds easily, the government and capitalists are bound to follow it in quick succession with similar offensive in all industries. This is so because already the capitalist crisis has reached the stage of open bursting. Stocks are accumulating and capitalists are demanding open wage-cuts and retrenchment as the way out. Lockouts have started. The only thing that has deterred the government and the capitalists from opening a full offensive till now is the resistance of the workers, the fear that resistance might lead to revolutionary results. Now they must face the risk of the resistance of the workers leading to big upheavals — they cannot mark time.

This means the crisis is bursting out; this means that the capitalists and the government seek to solve the crisis in their favour by means of bullets, machine guns and rifles, not just postpone the issue.

The strike is thus a call for meeting the challenge of the government and the capitalist class. The strike is one of the most important parts of the revolutionary struggle called forth by capitalist crisis—struggle to solve the crisis in favour of the working class—the struggle which at a higher stage necessarily develops into a struggle for power. Whoever now deserts strike, shows vacillations—really abandons all struggle against the capitalists and government.

#### 4 Documents of The Communist Movement In India

To achieve their aim, the solution of the capitalist crisis at the expense of the workers, by wage-cuts, the government will move decisively and quickly— unless on each occasion it meets with dogged resistance from the workers— unless the CPI, mobilising workers and its following from other sections, not only repels such attacks but creates the consciousness and organisation to raise the question of power to solve the crisis permanently in favour of the toiling masses.

By leading isolated battles, by leading isolated strikes by resisting at every step the capitalist offensive, the CPI teaches the workers to fight, and creates in them the consciousness that the problem of poverty is a problem of political power. When the political thesis of the second congress described the period as a revolutionary period, it precisely meant thereby a situation in which the capitalists will be compelled to force the masses into action repeatedly, and in which the party will be able to lead the masses and make them see that the present rule must go. The daily struggles of the masses are struggles full of revolutionary import. They are links in the living chain which leads to power. Every attack defeated here, every attack strongly resisted, means more confidence to the army of the proletariat, more organisation to challenge the rule of capitalists and put an end to all misery. Every partial demand won, is not only a source of relief but also a source of confidence in the victory of the working class. That is why in defending the day-to-day interests doggedly— we never forget the fact that ultimately poverty will not end without ending the capitalist rule, and while working for the final aim we never forget the daily struggle in which the masses are trained to equip for the final battle. Success in these struggles means so much relief as well as organisation: it means paralysation of capitalist offensive; it means preventing the class enemy from launching his offensive, preparation to opening our counter-offensive.

It is in this background the coming railway strike must be understood.

Firstly, if we are vigilant and active, despite government repression and socialist treachery, the railway strike, even from the beginning, will be of a very extensive character involving tens of thousands of workers. It will not be like any isolated

ordinary strike taking place in the midst of capitalist crisis but one of the biggest proletarian actions which because it is connected with the means of communication will have profound effect not only on the other sections of the workers, but on sections of peasantry also.

Secondly, the strike of the railway workers constitutes the first big major reply of the working class to the capitalist offensive here. For the first time after the war there is going to be a decisive trial of strength between the government on the one hand and the working class on the other.

Therefore the government will utilise every method of repression, brutality, atrocity, coupled with every kind of restriction to defeat the railway workers, to disrupt their ranks so that immediately after that they can continue their offensive against other sections of the workers.

In leading the railway strike, therefore, our party shoulders the biggest responsibility because we will be in the vanguard of the working class and ours is the responsibility to paralyse further government offensive, to defeat it and to see that the interests of the railway workers are protected. It thus is not going to be like any other partial struggle but a decisive trial of strength, a political trial of strength between the two classes, the working class and the big bourgeoisie and its government.

It is this political battle, the opening battle in the post-war crisis between the working class leading the toiling millions and the capitalist class and its government, a battle which has to be fought with all the dogged resistance and strength that we can command. For on the resistance and counter-attack launched here, on the defeat inflicted on the government offensive here, depends to a great extent how far the remaining sections of the workers, the big bulk of the working class, will be organised and enthused to fight the defeat of the capitalist offensive, to fight and defeat this new attempt of the Nehru government to stabilise its political rule by launching economic offensive and political terror against the masses. *If we succeed in putting up protracted resistance so that everyone sees that the workers are fighting and defending with great valour, if we succeed in putting up such a resistance*

that it bursts through the lying propaganda and wall of political isolation which the government is seeking to erect, then not only will we compel the government to withdraw the offensive against the railway workers but we will enthuse and galvanise the other sections of the workers to such an extent that the government will not think of attacking them for a long time to come. On the other hand we can create conditions under which long before the government offensive we can launch a united proletarian counter-offensive to demand better conditions and solve the capitalist crisis in favour of the toiling millions.

The strategic importance of this struggle in the post-war revolutionary crisis that is sweeping India must therefore be understood. It is precisely because of this that the government has opened its brutal offensive against the working class, it is precisely because of this that its fifth columnists, the socialist leaders, JP and other traitors and vacillators in the ranks of the party must not only be turned out but branded as traitors and hounded out of the working class movement.

Under what conditions have we to lead this strike? As we have seen the conditions are, firstly, the increasing offensive of the government and the treachery of the Socialist Party leadership.

What does the government seek to achieve? The government knows that today there is acute discontent among all sections of railway workers. Such discontent, on its recent offensive that a general strike of all the railways leading to complete paralysation of the means of communication and leading to still further mass actions of other sections is on the agenda.

Firstly to prevent this, to disrupt this discontent, it has taken in its confidence its henchman JP so that the accumulated discontent should not have a nationwide all-India character. With the help of socialist treachery the government hopes to keep some sections of the railway running so that the impression is created on the people that things are still normal, so that the full power of railway workers is not hurled against the government.

Secondly the government knows and realises that it is the communists and their following that is the vanguard of the railway



workers' movement. The government realises that the underground leadership of the CP is the real guiding force of the movement, that it is connected with the mass of railway workers through hundreds of active trade-unionists, militant workers and party members who are in the open. By launching an offensive against the active railway workers, PMs and militants, the government is attempting to snap the link between the political vanguard of the working class, the CP, and the mass of the railway workers. Its tactics are simple : it knows that thousands of workers will go on strike whatever happens but it wants these thousands to be deprived of any organised leadership so that the struggle becomes chaotic and can be defeated easily. The meaning of the arrest of hundreds of railway workers effected last week is this that the main active leadership which connects the mass of railway workers with the underground centre which is the guiding force of the movement is removed from the field, so that even if the strike takes place it should be without the guiding force of the party. It also means that the government has cleared the decks for enabling the socialists and other traitors to confuse the workers and approach them for their disruptive purposes.

The third form of government offensive will be through the press. Having closed down the trade-union press, having arrested all the militants and cut off the workers in different parts from their trade-union centre as well as from the party, having deprived them of all means of propaganda and agitation, the government will launch all its weapons of propaganda to create demoralisation and to spread the idea that because of repression, because of the opposition of the Socialist Party, there is not going to be any strike on 9 March. These rumours repeatedly put in the daily press will be utilised to demoralise the wavering sections, confuse other sections and even to make certain advanced sections vacillate, all the more so if they are not effectively counter-acted by the workers and their organisations, by the party and its units and all the feeling of uncertainty and vacillation is banished from the minds of the workers.

In short, the recent methods adopted by the government make it clear that from now on till 9 March it is a race between ourselves

on the one hand and the disruptors, the Socialist Party, the INTUC and the government on the other, to get hold of the workers. The socialists, the INTUC and the government will count mostly on backward workers who are under the influence of the Socialist Party or the INTUC or who have illusions about the government, on our weaker sections who will vacillate most. They all will utilise every weapon of propaganda, from mass meetings; from meetings to the public, from meetings in bustees to create uncertainty, fear, terror, vacillation, so that disruption is complete.

This is the meaning of JP's treachery, of the government offensive, of the call of the INTUC and the threatening tone of all government officials and spokesmen. The fact that widespread arrests have been ordered and that full preparations have been made to carry on wholesale repression clearly shows that government had no confidence that the socialist leaders will be able to prevent development of a widespread strike. In fact the government is panicky. There will be a tendency in our ranks to under-estimate the strength of the workers, the intensity of the discontent amongst them and especially the strength of our own influence, because our leadership mostly coming from the petty-bourgeoisie is often influenced by the bourgeois papers, by the poison that is spread by them and lose faith in the workers. The reality is that our strength is immense and if we are really able to bring the workers decisively into action, we will not only have a widespread railway strike over several railways but we can successfully paralyse almost all the railways because when the workers under the influence of the Socialist Party and others hear of large masses in action under our influence, they will instinctively strike and join their fighting brethren. The point is to realise that we have enough strength to act on our own and through it to set in motion thousands of other railway workers who are not directly under our influence. The government knows it and therefore the government is taking steps to see that the message of our action does not reach the workers under the influence of other parties, to see that even our own workers do not get their confidence to strike decisively because of lack of

propaganda, agitation and effective counter-acting of the false rumours set in motion by the government.

Therefore our first and foremost task is to see that we in the coming days are able to fight the specific methods of disruption used by the government and the Socialist Party, that our first aim is to see that all the workers under our direct influence are brought on strike and secondly to see that these workers through their action as well as before they actually come on strike are able to send their message to the tens of thousands of other workers who may not be under our influence. Our first task therefore is to burst through new impediments created by the government, impediments through repression, through strangulation of our propaganda and agitation machine, through denial of the columns of the press to us and to see that we reach immediately as broad a mass of workers as is possible for us.

This in the first place means creating new links between the party and the mass of workers through active local centres, through re-establishing links with railway militants and through making these function systematically. It means, firstly regular functioning of underground or semi-underground strike committees of rank-and-file workers led by PMs, effective fight against all vacillations and doubts and creating confidence that on 9 March the workers will strike. The importance of strike committees all over has been sufficiently stressed in the previous circulars of the railway fraction and it will be a grave crime against the working class if these strike committees are not established and are not functioned. As the strike approaches, these strike committees can more and more be broadened but even in the beginning they should be sufficiently broad though they might function underground.

How will these strike committees and local party centres effectively discharge their responsibilities, to beat back socialists and disruption? The first thing that they have to do is to learn to combat this disruption on their own and not to look to the district centre or the provincial centre to give the lead. To wait for instruction from above can only be denounced as sabotage because now 90 percent of the work depends on how far the

local centres and the local committees seize the initiative in fighting disruption of the class enemy. The local strike committees and the local party centres should through posters, cyclostyled handbills, mouth propaganda, everyday counteract all the rumours that are set afloat among the workers, they themselves should study the bourgeois papers which are read by the workers and reply to the propaganda. Secondly, from party papers, from our own sources, from bourgeois press and any other source that they have got, news of resistance of railway workers in any part of the province, in any part of India, all news about meetings, processions, demonstrations in support of railway workers, all news about clashes between the workers and the government, between peasants and government, between any section of the people and the government must be broadcast to the workers through posters, handbills and other means to enthuse the railway workers that a big fight against the government is on and the strike will take place on 9 March. Locally they should see that local unions or local union leaders, mass of local workers, every other section day in and day out say something in favour of the railway workers so that the confidence of the railway workers in their own victory is strengthened. If a number of local centres and district centres go on exchanging information with each other, it will help to keep the morale of the workers and increase their confidence in their unity and strength. Needless to say the provincial centre and the TU centres should help the local centres in supplying all such news, in counter-acting all rumours, but whether provincial centre is able to do it or not, locally these tasks should be discharged.

By local centres is not meant the district or taluka centres, not even centre for a whole big city, but even centres for railway workers' colonies, for station yards, for smaller areas, for loco-sheds, workshops and departments, so that all these smaller centres really function effectively and in time. No doubt to supervise activity of smaller areas the town committee, the city committee, the district committee, may be there but the real initiative in fighting the day-to-day propaganda of our enemies will lie with these centres and if they do not do it the strike will

be jeopardised. It is not suggested that only these local committees or centres should work. The responsibilities of the higher bodies are there and must continue and they will be directly held responsible if they do not co-ordinate these centres and themselves do not work.

In order to help the railway leaders and railway unions to function these centres effectively, to reach as wide a mass as possible, the party must throw in as many cadres as possible on this front, to help propaganda and agitation in the coming few days. Students, workers from other industries, women, all who can be mobilised should be handed over to the local centres and committees for propaganda and agitational work under the guidance of the comrades there, for posterings, for holding bustee meetings, for using every kind of weapon to reach as many workers as possible and for calling on the workers themselves to go and broadcast the propaganda and agitation. It is a race between our propaganda and our enemy's propaganda and we must win in it. This means not only hundreds of party members should be thrown into the railway workers' strike, students and others working on other fronts; it also means that posterings, cyclostyling and other things will have to be done even in a single city and town from more than one centre, from several centres, so that we are in time on every occasion. In cities like Calcutta, we should immediately see how many new cadres can be thrown into the railway strike and they should be put at the disposal of the railway comrades. Some of the leading student comrades together with students members as well as sympathisers can be thrown into the strike and can be even sent outside for propaganda and agitation. The same has to be done in other towns and cities, like Bombay, Madras, etc. In these cities especially, leading working class elements from other industries must be thrown into the strike, to organise the railway workers and lead them, to propagate and agitate. If they succeed in agitating alone with members of strike committees and other active railway workers they will raise in the shortest possible time a number of leaders from the rank-and-file railway workers who will make the task of propaganda and agitation very easy.

The aim of this propaganda and agitation is not only to counter off the manoeuvres of the class enemy but to see that in doing so hundreds of railway workers come forward to take up the challenge and become active organisers and defenders of the strike. The aim really is to reach its voice to those who for lack of propaganda and agitation may think that the fate of the strike is already sealed. It is only by throwing the strength of the party into the strike, it is only by out-running the power of bourgeois propaganda by our own resources and in time, that we can hope to defeat the paralysing offensive of the bourgeois and its agents. This is the first thing that has to be done.

One of the important tactics and important weapons of conveying our propaganda to other railways as well as to our weaker sections on our own railways is sending of delegations of sections of workers, delegation of staunch workers and even if they are arrested will still carry on enough propaganda to inspire other workers to join the battle. These delegations may start legally or may start underground, but they should visit weak centres, carry on inspiring propaganda there and if necessary some of them should even court arrest if that helps in steeling the resolve of the workers there. As far as possible these delegations should be in their own working dress because the average worker knows that they are just common workers like him who are being arrested and who are propagating for the strike. Proper agitation by such delegations is going to have tremendous effect on the wavering workers and will be a potent weapon of exposing the propaganda of the government and socialist leaders that the strike is only the affair of the CP and that the broad mass of workers is not interested in it.

Apart from the linking of the party with the railway workers through throwing in new cadres, through building local centres everywhere, the provincial committees must see that certain prominent members of the district committees participate in the strike, personally leading the teams and guiding them. While we want the district and provincial committees to protect their personnel yet some comrades must be spared to take the risk and lead the railway workers' struggle personally. (They should avoid

arrest as far as possible.) Nonetheless they should keep personal contact with the cadres working and visiting bustees under proper protection, sometimes even addressing meetings and certainly addressing group meetings, so that they are in position to see how far the work is being done and check personally mistakes. And in place like Calcutta, for instance, quite a number of the present DC can be allotted to outside areas or even sent outside Calcutta to places like Asansol and Lillooah to work there, along with local committee or group.

What should be the line of our propaganda? Apart from countering government propaganda that there is no enthusiasm for strike and that no one supports strike we will have to fight and expose government policy as has been seen in recent statements. The repressive measures taken by the government, the fact that the Congress leaders are drawing fat salaries, but they are denying the elementary right of workers, facts of railway earnings, the fact that government has not given a single assurance but on the other hand it is determined to pursue its offensive with the aid of repression—all these things must stand out in our agitation. We have to carry on our agitation in such a way that even in our weak centres or even in centres under socialist influence we are able to raise the slogan "Down with the Nehru Government", "For a Workers' and Peasants' Government", we are able to denounce everywhere Nehru and Patel as the agents of Tata and Birla. In many places this is immediately possible; in some places it may be possible after initial agitation. In any case the test of our successful agitation is how quickly it makes the masses echo along with us the slogan "To Hell with the Nehru Government".

The aim of our agitation is also to expose the base treachery of the Socialist Party leadership. If in the course of the strike we do not succeed in really unmasking the Socialist Party leadership as the agent of the capitalists, then we would really have failed in our task of fighting reformism successfully. Today it is therefore necessary not only not to adopt a compromising attitude on the question of exposure but also to adopt that method of exposure and that agitation that will successfully expose the

socialists and force them to come out as open strike-breakers. How does JP today attempt to fool the masses? He is attempting to fool the masses by posing as if he is only postponing the strike, that he is only waiting for the negotiations to end and that something may come out of these negotiations. He is also trotting out slanders about the communists and the Soviet Union. Any exposure which only denounces JP as a traitor but does not tell the masses as to how he is stabbing the workers in the back will not have much effect on the weak and vacillating sections, especially on those who are under the influence of the socialist leadership. Such exposure will only advertise the fact that JP is opposed to strike without giving the necessary confidence that his opposition can be fought. In our exposure therefore we must clearly put before the workers that there is no question of negotiations now because the government has not accepted a single demand, that negotiations mean acceptance of withdrawal of cheap grain shops, that negotiations mean giving up the demand for Rs. 55 as minimum wage, that negotiations mean only giving time to the government to crush the workers and this is the meaning of JP's negotiations. It is thus that we must first concretely put the facts before the workers, before we describe him either as the strike-breaker or traitor. We must use such epithets and such descriptions as would really be telling and convincing and help us to rout the socialist leadership. It is the question of concrete situation in each locality. But this does not mean that we should tone down our exposure of JP or make any appeals to him. He has to be exposed as a person who has been and is sabotaging the strike and has joined the opponents, the enemies of the railway workers. This much we have to say under all circumstances concretely on the basis of the facts as cited above. The fight for the demands of the railway workers is thus simultaneously a fight against treachery of the reformists and must be carried on as such.

Simultaneously with the exposure of JP and the socialist leaders there should be consistent appeal by our workers and our delegations to all workers under the influence of the Socialist Party as well to join this great common battle and not to act as strike-breakers. All the elementary lessons of unity and the



common bond of suffering must be brought forth to stress that the struggle of the railway workers is one and indivisible, that anyone who goes against it only joins the exploiters and oppressors against his own brethren. By making this appeal to the masses of railway workers under the influence of the Socialist Party we should not in the least relax our fight against and tone down the denouncement of all those workers who take a prominent part on behalf of the SP in propagating against the strike. If a worker becomes a strike-breaker under the influence of the SP, he has to be denounced and not to be pandered to. Sometimes our comrades commit the mistake of adopting a conciliatory attitude towards such workers especially the higher-paid workers who are the followers of the SP. We must always make a distinction between misguided workers and those who are the confirmed followers of the SP and we must wage an irreconcilable struggle against all those vacillators, workers or otherwise, who oppose the strike. Our aim should be to demoralise and paralyse those strike-breakers belonging to the SP by bringing into action against them the strength and initiative of the workers. Wherever we are strong and wherever we can do it without affecting the unity of the workers we should bring out demonstrations of workers denouncing the Socialist Party leaders as strike-breakers with the slogan "Socialist Party Leaders Murdabad". Such demonstrations if they really do not split the ranks of the fighting workers are potent instruments of paralysing the Socialist Party leaders and their followers and making honest ones realise that the working class is coming against them. However in organising such demonstrations every care must be taken to see that they do not create diversion and lead to a fight among workers themselves and lead to a fight among pro-strike elements. This may not be a problem in South India, Bengal, and perhaps Bihar and Assam. In UP, Bombay city and certain other parts this may have to be taken into account.

We must also expose JP's attack against communists by saying that in attacking the communists who are in the forefront of every workers' struggle, JP is only fulfilling the role of the enemy of the working class. He is attacking only the forces that consistently

stand against the rule of capital and for a workers' and peasants' government. We must also denounce JP's anti-Soviet reference by saying that it is natural for him to slander the Soviet Union where the workers and peasants rule because he hates a real revolutionary fight against the rule of capital.

To sum up, the line of our attack against the Socialist Party leadership must be that they are opposing the unity of the striking workers in the interests of the capitalists, that this is not the first time they did it, that in Bombay during the railway workers' strike in 1947, in Calcutta during the tramway workers' strike in 1948-49 and several other strikes they have repeatedly betrayed the interests of the workers and that they are following the same policy on the railways. We will judge the success of our propaganda by the result it achieves, namely how far the socialist leadership gets isolated and branded as the strike-breaking leadership.

At the same time it is incumbent on us, on all local unions and all party committees, on all the comrades on the railway workers' front, to bring to the forefront the leading role of the CP in the railway workers' struggle, through issue of handbills and posters in the name of the party, along with posters and leaflets in the name of the unions and strike committees, by making militant workers and PMs proudly own before the railway workers that they are communists and that it is the party that has made fighting men of them, by replying to all the slanders and by creating in the workers the consciousness that the CP is the party of the working class, by explaining to the workers what the party stands for and why it is the party of the working class. The tendency in our ranks not to talk in the name of the party is a false tendency which must be vigorously fought. Considering the fact that the party is actively leading the railway workers, not to bring to the forefront the name of the party in every possible way is to prevent thousands of railway workers from realising the fact that it is the party that is leading their struggle and thus prevent them from becoming members of the party. The working class will learn more about the party within ten days of the strike than in ten years of normal peaceful agitation

and therefore the party must be brought to the forefront. Only when the workers see that those who lead them in person, those who suffer for them, those who fight for them, all are members of the CP and have acknowledged themselves to be members of the party, only then will thousands of workers realise that they and the party are one, the party is not an alien organisation. In meetings, demonstrations, in speeches by individual workers, the party must be brought to the forefront, the slogans of the party should be given so that everyone knows that the party is taking a leading part in the struggle.

Apart from directly leading the railway workers, the party and its units, mass organisations under the influence of the party, have the responsibility of creating workers' and public support for the railway workers' strike and also creating conditions among workers for sympathetic action in favour of the railway workers. We must frankly realise that the government will do its best to isolate the railway workers' struggle, especially from the petty bourgeoisie, to misrepresent it and to exploit the inconveniences that might be caused by the railway strike, to fan the hatred of the petty bourgeoisie against the railway workers. The government will create panicky pictures about food famine and try to pass on the results of its own crimes to the railway workers; through press and platform, a barrage of hatred will be unleashed. This has to be fought decisively by the party as a whole and has to be fought politically by exposing every move of the government and its spokesmen. It is incumbent on the provincial committees and district committees and even lower committees to appoint a special subcommittee to meet this propaganda among the petty-bourgeoisie, to counteract it effectively through leaflets, posters, by replying to arguments about food famine etc. Any neglect in doing this will react badly on the struggle as a whole.

It is true that in many places sections of petty-bourgeoisie at least will not be taken in so easily by government propaganda but that is no reason why we should not effectively counteract it. In places like Calcutta there might be illusions that the railway workers' strike might lead to the same automatic sympathy that was shown to the students' struggle by the petty-bourgeoisie of Calcutta. Such an illusion should not be nourished. The government

is no doubt discredited in Calcutta among the petty-bourgeoisie. Still the sympathy for the student crowd was sympathy for their own class. When the railway workers enter the field and the government propaganda machine is turned against them and when the full terror is unleashed, a vacillating petty-bourgeoisie may be neutralised, it will even be antagonised, unless the workers act decisively and its propaganda blows up the government campaign of slander. Any tendency to draw general conclusions from what happened in Calcutta in connection with the student demonstrations might do much harm and keep the proletariat complacent. There is no doubt that if we persuade the mass of students to fraternise with the railway workers in places like Calcutta things might go the other way and the government will be once more completely isolated. The mass of students will participate only when they see decisive action on the part of the workers and only when they are freed from the propaganda of government press. It is therefore of great importance that our party should wage a fight against the slanderous campaign that will be launched among the petty-bourgeoisie so that the attempt of the government to isolate the railway workers' struggle is defeated. This fight can be launched through leaflets, posters in every form of propaganda and agitation that is possible. Meetings of course may not be possible. That is why we may have to fall back on other forms of agitation.

To be able to defeat the sense of isolation and uncertainty that the government wants to create in relation to the railway workers it is necessary in all the towns and cities first to get resolutions passed from the trade unions, student organisations, women's organisations and others and distribute these resolutions in support of the railway strike through our own machinery. A few such resolutions passed by organisations or even few such statements issued by various organisations appearing before the railway workers will go a long way in breaking through that sense of isolation that the government wants to create. Resolutions should be passed by all our TU organisations, mass meetings wherever possible should be held by them to lend support to the railway workers and a number of railway workers

should be called to these meetings so that they are able to broadcast the support of these meetings to other railway workers. Again, resolutions passed in these meetings should be broadcast through our own machinery among the railway workers. In cities like Calcutta and Bombay and in other towns we should organise processions of workers even in defiance of section 144 to go to the railway colonies to announce the workers' support to the railway workers' strike. Police action against such processions will be a decisive weapon in our hands to announce to the railway workers that the other workers seriously support their strike, and are determined to stand by them. Such demonstrations and big meetings convened locally or in a citywide scale will be a tremendous weapon in steeling the vacillating sections and enabling us to hurl our full strength in our strong sections. If possible a number of factories and concerns should be brought on strike on the eve of 9th of March either in sympathy with the railway workers' strike or to fight for their own grievances. By the 7th or 8th in places like Bombay or Calcutta a call for sympathetic action may be given or such sympathetic action may be reserved for the 9th itself. The advantage of having it earlier, specially if it is big, will be that it will help to remove all uncertainty among the minds of railway workers and make them to take a decisive step on the 9th. In any case we should prepare also for general action on the 9th and see that a number of industries and factories come on strike on that day in sympathy with the railway workers.

Thus through workers' actions, demonstrations, defiance of section 144, sympathetic strikes, through the support of students' and women's organisations, through leaflets and initiative of local committees, through counter-acting all day-to-day propaganda and through creating a general feeling among railway workers that wide sections of the working class and non-working class masses are supporting it, we must tear down the wall of isolation which the government seeks to build and unleash the railway workers struggle so that it quickly develops all over India.

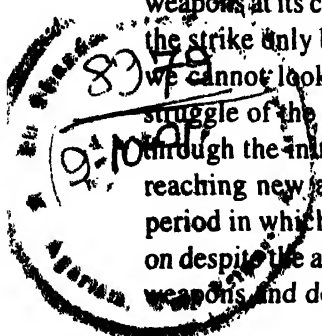
Any plan which neglects these initial preparations is likely to jeopardise the very development of the strike or make it very

indecisive and restricted affair thus helping the enemies of the working class.

To the extent that we do all these things in every important railway town, in every strategic railway centre to that extent we will increase the sweep of the strike and send its message beyond our own following which itself is sufficiently big, bringing into the struggle the mass of workers on all the railways. There should be no hesitation and uncertainty on this point. The discontent among the railway workers is swelling up so much that no amount of promises from JP & Co. will be actually in a position to stop it once the railway workers get the confidence that a united action is already on. What the bourgeoisie and the enemies of the working class are telling the workers is that no united action is possible without JP & Co. What we must show to them, demonstrate to them, in action is that united action is on despite the opposition of the Socialist Party and in order to demonstrate this we must burst through the special methods of disruption which are going to be used by the government and the socialist leaders and we should on no account neglect or fail to counteract propaganda and agitation carried on by the bourgeois press and statements of leaders like JP and others. But there are comrades whose faith in the strength of the fighting forces is so much undermined by the propaganda of the bourgeois press that they surrender instead of fighting it.

So far as we are concerned the struggle for safeguarding the strike, to extend and deepen it is from the beginning going to be a political struggle of first-rate importance in which the government will be fighting us with all the political and repressive weapons at its command and in which we will be able to organise the strike only by defeating these political weapons. Therefore we cannot look upon the present struggle as merely a partial struggle of the old type but as a struggle which once we break through the initial repression of the government, is capable of reaching new and high revolutionary forms. The present is a period in which we see the great Telangana struggle still going on despite the army of the Nehru government with all its modern weapons, and despite the mass terror that it has launched. The

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present is a period in which we see that the masses on their own are resisting the arrest of and defending their leaders and members of the CP and peasant women and coming forward protecting and defending their leaders. This desperation and this death-defying spirit is the hallmark of a people which is getting ready for a decisive conflict with the present government, which is getting ready for revolution. The railway workers' struggle is a part of this great revolutionary conflict and once the full force is unleashed it might rise to any heights. It might rise to any new height even locally if the full force is unleashed in big towns, cities like Calcutta. Such is the potentiality of the strike. That is why the government is panicky and trembling before it. That is why the members of the party cannot look upon the struggle as a partial struggle but one in which the government will resort to every kind of atrocity and one which will be fought with all the brutality, doggedness and decisiveness of a civil war. We must therefore be ready not only to protect the struggle, not only to defend the workers, but also to see that it really becomes a popular struggle in reply to government terror and that we are able to bring large sections of the people to hurl back the might of the government and its policy of repression, that we are able to inspire the people to raise along with us the slogan of "Down with the Nehru Government". It is just because these potentialities exist that the government would do its best to see that the struggle is isolated and remains at best a railway workers' struggle. Our policy will be to make it an all-workers' struggle and later on an all-people's struggle.

From the very beginning the struggle will assume a very ferocious character. There are rumours that the government will take steps to drive the workers out of their quarters, that it will cut their water supply, that it will stop their rations, etc. Apart from that there will be mass arrests, firings and shootings, lathi charges and atrocities on railway workers' women and children. In this struggle therefore as soon as the mood of the masses rises, there is no question of obeying any law or any order, there is no question of courting arrests tamely. Every attack of the police must be resisted with all the resources at our command.

The colonies and quarters of railway workers must be defended and barricaded. In resisting the attacks on railway workers the entire working class and entire people must be invited to participate. When the railway workers are attacked with brutal weapons we will resist with all the means at our command and we must prepare from the beginning for that. That is, we must be in a position to offer armed resistance whenever the workers are attacked. And not wait for attack either. We must be in a position to anticipate the attack and launch our own attack and take the enemy by surprise. What we have to see is that the resistance of the workers does not remain a partial affair, it develops into an affair of the entire working class so that the entire working class takes up the challenge of the government. The attack and repression against the railway workers should be used to rouse sections of the petty-bourgeoisie also to take up the challenge of the government. We must be ready for such attacks from the very beginning, we must be ready to resist them with determination and decisiveness. Our TU organisations from now onwards must carry on such propaganda among other sections of workers that any attack against the railway workers will quickly bring them to their feet, will bring them into streets and enable us and them to take up the challenge of the government. The old method of giving a call after the firing must be replaced by the new method of keying up the expectations of the workers to the highest pitch so that as soon as an attack takes place we are able to bring them into the streets in the shortest possible time. All our plans of militant resistance hinge upon the possibility of bringing large mass of workers into the streets. If we succeed in doing that then we will be able to resist repression successfully and rout the forces of the government.

The events of 18-19 January in Calcutta when the students raised barricades demonstrated both the weakness of the situation as well as its strength. The fact that a section of the petty-bourgeoisie, the university students, was forced to resist with arms the armed attack of the forces of the government demonstrates how the government is getting discredited in the class which supports it, its own class, and how deep the discontent



is among the lower sections of the petty-bourgeoisie. But the fact that the working class was not brought into the streets also led to the result that a decisive battle could not be given though even then the government had to retreat and withdraw section 144. Ten times more discontent is accumulated among the workers. Any militant action properly propagated and organised will lead to results of great importance challenging the very power of the government in places like Calcutta. But the whole thing depends upon whether we are able to bring the power of the large mass of workers into the streets. Once that power is on the streets nothing can stop them from marching forward and that power can be brought into action if from now onwards we are able to propagate among other sections of workers about the importance of the railway strike. If we bear this in mind, there is no limit to the potentialities which might follow out of such developments. The entire system of government can be paralysed, the entire machinery of repression can be put out of action and the forces of the government can be even routed, locally in towns and cities.

What exactly is to be done in such a situation, which are the strategic points to be attacked, which are the seats of oppression to be demolished and which are the key personnel that may be vanquished are things which will have to be studied by special committees. But from now onwards we must make special preparations for adopting militant resistance, for fighting the forces of the government for raising barricades if attacked and so on.

In this connection it is incumbent on every committee of the party and also the strike committee of the railway workers to appeal to the police and the army not to shoot on the workers and to turn their weapons against their own oppressors and disarm their officers. Through our propaganda and agitation we must concentrate against the higher officials, appeal to the ranks of the police and demoralise the officials and make them panicky about their own ranks. We must see whether we can bring about a strike of the police and synchronise it with the strike of the railway workers. We must adopt bold tactics and appeal to the

police in the course of demonstration through megaphones etc. to join the people and disarm the officers. This does not mean that we will not fight the police when they fire on us but we should make every effort to win the lower ranks of the armed and other police to our side, especially because the police themselves are wavering nowadays. We should also appeal to the armed forces whenever they are brought in operation against us.

It was seen on 18-19 January in Calcutta that the police wavered and did not open fire and the military had to be called. This is a sign of the times. One such success in winning over the police will increase the confidence of the masses so much that it will inspire them to new and decisive action. The police should be approached as part of the same class from which the workers and peasants come. They should be appealed to in the name of their own class and also in the name of their own grievance. They should be openly told not to serve the capitalist-landlord government, not to oppress their own brethren. So also the armed forces.

In rural areas, when means of communications are paralysed, we can bring into operation our peasant mass and make a straight bid for taking possession of the land of the landlords and drive out the landlords and exploiters from the villages; we should take possession of whatever means of defence that might be there and defend the railway workers in their fight. We should try to swing in large masses of agricultural workers, poor peasants and others in this struggle, all the more because most of the gangmen and others are either agricultural labourers and poor peasants who directly come from these classes.

In cities and towns the aim of our activity should be to bring about complete stoppage of all industries in a general strike to help the railway workers so that this strike reaches a higher pitch.

All this means that this railway workers' strike itself should from the very beginning be organised with sufficient strength so that the entire section of the people is impressed with it and the government propaganda is punctured from the very beginning.

It is obvious that the situation is such that in many places and towns and cities the struggle may develop to the highest

pitch of armed struggle against the government and we must be prepared to lead it. It should be our conscious endeavour to develop it to that pitch. It is only by putting the maximum resistance possible that we will not only be able to defend the interests of the railway workers and the entire working class but to transform this vast army of workers in the course of struggle into a new revolutionary army out to defeat and overthrow the present government of capitalists and landlords. The resistance that we put in the course of this struggle will really transform the entire working class if that resistance is of a decisive and revolutionary character.

And if we organise our initial preparations well in those places where we have the combination of our strong influence over railway workers with strong peasant bases, we will develop the fight to the pitch of Telangana and will be able to carry it on for months without being defeated. But about these prospects we need not dilate further. Our task today is to see that these are the potentialities of the struggle and we must clear the decks for it by firstly organising the strike on as wide a scale as possible. Only by doing this we will successfully resist the Nehru government's attack to throw the burdens of the capitalist crisis on the workers and to stabilise its rule on the basis of economic exploitation and political terror.

And only by offering such resistance and paralysing the government machinery everywhere, paralysing its means of communications, will we be able to help the great struggle in Telangana which is still holding out despite the fact that we as a party have done practically nothing to help it all over India. A decisive railway strike with all its attendant developments might break the backbone of the oppressors of Telangana and put them to flight. Not only that it might help our comrades to extend further beyond Telangana into the remaining part of Hyderabad.

It is in this background of these responsibilities that every comrade, every member of the party and every party committee has to understand its own responsibility towards the railway strike and throw its full weight into the struggle. Its first task is to remove from the field and from strategic positions all those

comrades, whatever may be their seniority and position, who are likely to vacillate in the mass struggle and who might betray the party and the working class. Such persons must be thrown out of key positions and transferred to different places or different fronts. The most trusted and fighting elements must be put in key positions on behalf of the party so that the name of the party is not disgraced in this critical period. A very good deal depends on the personal heroism and sacrifice of our comrades, of those who will be in charge, DC members and others who will be in the railway colonies and quarters, or for defying the bans or fighting or taking offensive. In this struggle the members of the party should set a new standard of heroism and unflinching courage and workers must know that with death-defying courage the members of the party, their party, will fight. On occasions of clash and conflict, it is sometimes necessary to put well-known communists in the forefront so that every worker sees that the communists are by his side. Those who shirk, those who flinch, those who waver or vacillate, will be guilty of treachery to the party and the working class. And during the course of the strike many more party leaders can actually leave their underground shelters with safety and actively participate in the railway workers' struggle, agitation, demonstration and even in defence. Remaining underground should not mean remaining underground from the class struggle, from one of the biggest class actions of the workers under our leadership. While taking proper precautions for the safety of the party and safety of its personnel, comrades can be released to organise the fighting squads of the railway workers, to actively participate in the fighting, so that we get steeled in battle and the party learns out of the struggle.

On every committee, on every PM, therefore lies the responsibility to give his best to this great and big struggle organised by our party, the precursor of the mighty revolutionary battles that are looming ahead. This first skirmish is going to be the test of the fighting heroism and courage of our PMs, of our loyalty to the party and of the organising capacity and the capacity for leadership of our party units. The manner in which we lead it, the decisiveness with which we fight the battle, is

going to decide whether the party in the immediate future, in the next few months, is going to be the biggest proletarian force in India claiming the loyalty of tens of thousands of workers or whether it is to continue to be a small affair as it is now. There is no doubt that the hundreds of PMs who have fought the most tenacious battles in the earlier years of the party, who have withstood the goondaism of the Congress with all their courage, who have seen many strike battles, will lead the party to its success, will lead the railway workers to victory, will fight back all repression and out of the struggle will forge a new party based upon the mass of the workers, a party which will symbolise the fact that vast masses of workers have given up their illusions about the reformist leadership and have consciously chosen the revolutionary leadership of their party, the Communist Party.

## Party Circular On The Reaction To Ninth March Railway Strike \*

You are meeting to discuss the railway strike. The reports already received from some provinces about reactions to 9th March show that as usual the vacillators are drawing their interpretation of the big events.

What are the facts? Firstly, that the CPI trailing behind the reformists had failed to take up the cause of the railway workers earlier. A strike which should have started on 1 January was delayed for 2½ months.

Secondly, the government came out with the most ferocious repression and sweeping arrests. The number of arrests is not less than 2000. Nehru said on 20 February that 800 were arrested. The *Times of India* reported that in 48 hours preceding the 9th alone 800 were arrested.

The arrest of 2000 railway workers meant a clean sweep of every militant and active railway worker.

In addition in places railway colonies were surrounded, and all our links were snapped.

Never was there so sweeping arrests before any strike. It had not happened in the history of India. And never had there been so many workers working in any industry arrested. On top of this was the virtual establishment of martial law.

The traitors and vacillators will forget this elementary fact about governmental repression. If you accept their reasoning it means that you must first secure a guarantee from the government that there will be no repression before we can think of a strike. This is Joshism once again.

Firstly, the widescale and sweeping repression must wake our ranks to the fact the strikes are now grim class battles and only those who dare fight them should call themselves communists. It is

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\* Circular issued by the General Secretary of the C.P.I. on March 21, 1949.

no longer cricket. The railway strike must open the eyes of our ranks to the fact that what has happened in connection with the railway strike will happen in every strike—i.e. mass repression—and that we, the party of the working class, must train the workers to break through this, to defeat this, or give up all pretence to fight the capitalist class.

This kind of repression is going to be our fate in every strike and it is precisely intended to turn us from the path of struggle. The capitalist class lashed into fury by the resistance of the working class, determined to show its American masters that it can hold India against the communists and panicky before the developments in China and Southeast Asia, is unleashing full repression in the very first skirmishes to prevent further developments. At this juncture any deflection from opposition to it is nothing short of treachery.

Secondly, it must be understood that this ferocious repression is a sign of weakness of the government and not strength. It was an open admission that notwithstanding the Congress and socialist influence, and the waverings of the majority of the railway workers, the government was afraid—and very correctly afraid—that if we succeed in making a big breach anywhere the entire pentup discontent would burst through. The waverers could be paralysed only by striking at us, by creating all round terror, by creating an atmosphere that there was no one to speak for strike. And to do this they had to arrest more than 2000 railway workers.

The government dared not stake either on its own prestige or the hold of JP. It dared not. This is the plain and simple truth that must be understood.

Thirdly, the weakness of government position must be understood from yet another fact. Was it possible to defeat this repression? Of course it was. The repression would have had no effect on the strike, rather it would have strengthened the strike, if the party had taken up the fight against JP earlier, and the illusions and hopes about him had been fought earlier. With a greater section of railway workers already free from confusion and illusion, the repression would have been completely defeated.

Party members must realise that it is treachery combined with unprecedented repression that has given the first temporary setback to the railway workers.

Neither treachery nor repression alone could do it.

It may be asked by the waverers, the vacillators, the cowards—but could we not have waited till the workers had shed illusions about JP—should we not have till then campaigned against JP and exposed him? Some such line has been advocated by the Tamil Nadu PC.

It must be bluntly stated there was no other course. We could not have waited just because all the limits of verbal propaganda, of verbal exposure, had been reached. First the ordinary worker sees the real difference between the revolutionary and reformist in action and not in words. The difference between communists and reformists had to come before the workers in action. The idea that first the *majority* is won and is made to shed its illusion about reformists through verbal propaganda and then strike action is launched is a reformist idea and has nothing in common with Marxism.

All the elements necessary for a struggle were there. Firstly the attack on workers was there—the grain concession was withdrawn; the other grievances were there; and all the demands had been turned down. We also were almost guilty of treachery to the railway workers when we gave up the decision for Rs 55 minimum wages etc. and confined only to rectification of anomalies.

Anyway the attack had started. The grain concessions were withdrawn. The mass of workers wanted to resist. JP or no JP, they would have followed us in action, and they had seen us leading it. Not to have attempted to lead them would have meant that in future attacks the workers would have held us as much guilty as JP, and correctly so it would have meant refusal to fight, it would have meant treachery.

And just because we were near success we were met with ferocious repression and full propaganda was turned against us.

Had we not decided to break with the reformist past and decided to give a fight against the first attack on the railway workers—we would have been damned as great betrayer as JP.

Many people seem to think that the working class and the attack of the capitalists do not matter. What matters is the prestige of certain leaders; the party's role is not to lead but to follow, give calls only when there is 100 per cent guarantee that they will be obeyed and if repression comes sit quiet. The party on the other hand bases its



slogans and calls on objective conditions, on the tempo of the workers, their mood etc. and seeks to lead them by overcoming their vacillations. It knows very well that on occasions the majority will vacillate, even when their wage is in question, and the party alone can lead them by overcoming the vacillations. The party also realises the possibility of any partial struggle being crushed, disorganised, etc. by severe repression or extreme vacillations created by political terror. but it is only by teaching the workers to overcome these, by teaching them that not to meet the challenge does not solve the question, by telling them that there is a force always ready to organise and lead the struggle, that the party educates the masses.

To judge each struggle in isolation, instead of in the context of the general struggle of the working class is nothing but reformism. To judge each struggle, its success, defeats, or failures, in the context of the general struggle of the working class is the hallmark of Marxism.

It may be asked why was there such a nationwide failure of the strike? Why did we not have a strike even in stronger areas? Firstly, because of the fact that it was precisely in the stronger areas that savage repression was launched, every key cadre had been picked up. On the SIR in 48 hours preceding the 9th, not less than 300 persons were arrested according to the *Times of India*. The so-called 'pockets' of communist influence were located and repressed.

Secondly, the arrest of 2000 from our strongholds was not only a heavy blow, it was a crushing blow, because the party had not yet got out of reformist methods of organisation with its emphasis on the wholetime organisers and lack of attention to the working worker and his leadership. The formation of strike committees, of broadbased strike committees had hardly begun: like the old days the mass was to be drawn in—after the strike.

Now more than ever our comrades will see how every failure to stick to basic organisational experience and truths leads to disaster. The strike committees are weapons of rank-and-file leadership; in strikes, the TU leaders or executives are not enough; for they can be easily repressed.

Thirdly, there is also a nauseating tale of vacillation, betrayal, cowardice in our ranks also; and apart from this a complacency

born out of the failure to understand that the government will strike with all its strength. The tempo and organisation of work since January seems to be of the days of legality—of the days when strikes could be easily postponed for another six months. Otherwise how could one explain the Tamil Nadu provincial committee's plea for postponement under the plea that there was not enough time to organise the strike? Can you ever get more than 2½ months in times of revolutionary developments to organise a strike?

Horrible opportunism, reformist mistakes, complacency, etc. were shown on the GIP—there was failure to bring the masses to the forefront.

And so in the first big skirmish—the railway workers' resistance was slayed by the government through brutal offensive. Should this fact cause dismay and panic in our ranks? The government expects the ordinary worker to believe that the struggle against the government is a lost cause; that it is too difficult, that it is impossible to struggle against the government; but the government never expects that it will make the communists believe it. Yet there seem to be some members, who are so revolutionary that they become panicky like the backward workers at the very first offensive. Many of these of course normally talk about the Red Army, about Mao and the Chinese red army; but they forget that Mao had to evacuate Yen-an only a couple of years back—and no one suggested to reconsider whether it was right to give fight to Chiang; and when nazi armies were near Moscow no one suggested to reconsider whether it was right to have opposed Hitler at all.

In the struggles, strike battles and revolutionary struggle for power—there will be many ups and downs; those who do not understand this know nothing of Marxism and make a mockery of working class struggle.

The fact that in the first skirmish the government has been able to enforce a wagecut without a major battle of resistance is very menacing. It means that taking advantage of this fact new offensive will open, forcing the workers into action. If because of the result of the first fight we get desperate, we will be helping the government in carrying on its offensive. The defence of railway workers is of primary importance to us and our attention must be concentrated on the coming battle.

The government has stayed the resistance in the first skirmish. It has not won the battle. The failure of the strike has not solved a single question. On the other hand the attack against the railway workers will burst forth in all its intensified form, and it has to be met. We alone can meet it.

The government may launch the attack piecemeal—taking advantage of the present confusion and initially we must be prepared to lead local struggles—protracted and bitterly fought. The piecemeal attack may be concentrated on our areas—and we must resist, or it may take the all India form and we must resist again. In any case local struggles should not be scrapped in the name of all-India struggles. They should be extended.

We enter the next phase with many favourable factors. Firstly the Nehru government stands before large sections of the workers as a terror regime, as a government which will not do anything unless coerced.

The illusions about the government therefore will be much less.

Secondly, the role of JP & Co also stands much more clearly as that of strike-breakers and traitors—which though it need not be exaggerated—yet certainly must not be underestimated. The railway workers have seen hundreds of their brethren being arrested—and JP & Co helping the government. To think that this does not mean anything—a new weapon to undermine reformism is to be a non-Marxist. This is a big weapon and has to be ruthlessly used with great confidence. Henceforth JP & Co can be held directly responsible for all the attacks and the disruptors can be fought better.

The offsetting factor will be petty-bourgeois panic in our own ranks and despondency among backward railway workers. If these are allowed to persist we cannot utilise the favourable factors.

No doubt there will be many honest party members, workers, non-workers, also militant and backward railway workers—all of whom will feel despondent, sorry, dejected. It is our task to tell these the real state of affairs, the fact that the battle has just begun, that the challenge has to be taken again because attacks will be coming. They should be told and convinced that such cowardice in the grim struggles, such panic at the first opportunity when the enemy was forced to use all his strength, is a sign of weakness.

We must frankly recognise that large sections of PMs are alien to all fighting traditions. They have alien conceptions of protracted struggles — dingdong battles. There are hundreds of PMs who have fought the most tenacious battles in the earlier years of the party, who have withstood goondaism of the Congress with all courage, who have seen many strike battles. Their fighting traditions must be revived.

The facile optimism born out of 18th -19th January events and the dejection born out of the 9th March are merely two sides of the same phenomenon. Patiently educate the ranks on this.

Your immediate tasks are as follows :

- (1) Issue a manifesto to the railway workers of 9th March and after—no cause for despondency.
- (2) Prepare for the coming battle—recognise TU work — outline tasks—how to link the mass with underground.
- (3) Demand release of arrested workers. Take lead in it.

**P.S :** Among the causes explaining why there could not be action anywhere—must be mentioned the fact that in large parts we had not developed any railway workers' fighting spirit and traditions.

## **Polit Bureau Documents On Bombay Hunger Strike \***

### **Resolution On Bombay Hunger Strike**

The PB strongly censures G. Adhikari for surrendering to the strike-breaking pressure from the Nasik and Yeravda jails leadership in connection with the hunger strike of Bombay detenus in May last. Adhikari by allowing himself to be overwhelmed by the developing funk in a section of the leadership, when the hunger strike was entering a decisive stage, helped in the betrayal of the strike.

The PB strongly censures CC members D.S. Vaidya, S.V. Parulekar and L.K. Oak, who failed to fight against this betrayal, and allowed themselves to be overwhelmed by the cowardly advices from the jail leaders. The PB notes that Oak has treated his crime so lightly that he has not submitted any explanation or self-criticism of his action. The PB gives a fortnight to Oak to submit his explanation, failing which the PB will recommend to the CC to expel him from the central and provincial committees of the party.

The PB gives a fortnight's time- limit to the members of the Bombay committee to individually submit their explanation regarding the reformist way in which the committee or its secretariat handled the hunger strike. The PB does not want longwinded explanation. It wants to know whether the members of the Bombay committee accept unreservedly the PB resolution and the document; and whether they admit their mistakes or not.

The PB congratulates the innumerable party members, the heroic sons of Bombay's working class on the brave and courageous way they conducted the hunger strike. The PB sends its special greetings to those who like Arthur Road (prison) women comrades fought back the treachery of men like Sardar Jafri and defended party honour.

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\* This resolution is dated September 30, 1949.

The PB salutes the memory of our Ahmedabad jail martyrs—our heroic brothers Jamnadas Mehta and Jayantilal Parekh and calls upon all party members in jail to fight back the slanderers who seek to belittle the heroism of our Ahmedabad comrades.

The PB strongly censures S.A. Dange for his activities and stand in relation to the various developments connected with the hunger strike, all of whom have been detailed out in the PB note. The PB is of the opinion that Dange's stand amounted to open sabotage of the hunger strike and that he betrayed the trust placed in him by the party congress when it elected him to the CC. The PB does not deem it necessary to go into details of his actions as they have been clearly analysed in the accompanying note.

The PB strongly censures Ajoy Ghosh and S. V. Ghate who along with Dange are guilty of cowardly funk in conducting the hunger strike—and who along with Dange must be held primarily responsible for the debacle of the strike. Like Dange, Ghosh and Ghate have betrayed the trust placed in them by the second congress when it elected them to the CC.

The PB decides to submit the conduct of these comrades to the CC and ask the CC whether it considers further disciplinary action necessary. The PB however recommends to the CC that final action should be deferred for some time and these comrades be given an opportunity to make a self-critical review of their mistakes.

The PB calls upon these comrades to study the tactical line documents very closely, apply them to their own conduct in jail and make an objective self-criticism of their own actions and submit it to the CC within a reasonable time.

The PB learns that there are quite a few members of the Bombay committee and Maharashtra committee in Yeravda jail. All of them are called upon to submit to the PB a statement on the stand they took on the developments connected with the hunger strike. They are also asked to make a self-critical review in the light of the PB resolution and note and state whether they unreservedly accept these two documents or not.

The two CCMs from Yeravda jail—Ghosh and Gate supported unanimously by the Yeravda jail committee, have made an attempt to give ideological cover to their vacillations and opportunism and have advocated openly a policy of meek submission to government terror, or only a formal opposition to save conscience and practically abandon all resistance to wanton attacks in the form of segregation of B class from A class, and transfer to concentration camps. Their letter which arrogantly demands withdrawal of a circular issued by the CCMs in Bombay asking them to resist transfers by all militant means—contains nothing but a plea for abandoning all resistance. Since these comrades make plentiful use of such Leninist terms as vanguard etc. to befuddle the minds of others, the ideological mask covering the opportunist practice advocated must be torn asunder.

Firstly these comrades fail to understand that the strike was betrayed because of their wrong outlook on every question, and the vacillations following from it.

They fail to understand it because in typical reformist fashion they fail to realise the real issues at stake—the class issues at stake in the hunger strike. Just because demands like abolition of classification, family allowances, etc. had figured also in the hunger strike of days when the Congress was not yet ruling, they get confused and fail to see the changed class character of the demands and hunger strike.

By introduction classification, by arresting workers on jobs and denying them family allowances, by giving the worst kind of treatment to the workers, and following it to the toiling peasants the Congress government was attacking the base of the party, was attacking our class—the working class, and attempting to intimidate individual members by starving their families by sending their wives and children to slow death. It was in short an attempt to demoralise and intimidate working class fighters—the base, the life of the party.

The attempt to segregate to the B class, which consists of working class detenus, is a further step to ideologically emasculate the working class elements—by tearing them away from others who could conduct theoretical activity. At the same time it is designed to launch the full fury of repression and jail terror against the working class detenus.

The government thinks that it will be easier to launch such terror against them once they are separated from the leaders and other petty-bourgeois elements and the news about such suppression can be easily blacked out.

At the same time the government gave better treatment to the leaders and educated intelligentsia inside the party, to create a fake show of good treatment to blunt the edge of our agitation. This was nothing but an attempt to corrupt certain elements and through them to tone down and sabotage struggle of the other class. Since the known leaders of the party and the educated middle class elements were given class I, it at the same time served to fool the petty-bourgeois opinion into the belief that detenus in jail were not worse off than what they were outside. By focusing attention on the special privileges granted to class I the government sought to create a general impression of well-being and screen from the public eye the fact of the horrible treatment of class II.

In Bombay government's propaganda it was exactly this line that was followed. In short through classification distinction the Bombay government was trying to placate upperclass non-proletarian elements in the party and suppress the proletarian elements.

Thanks to this, working class leaders with two decades of service in the cause of the proletariat found themselves in class II while petty-bourgeois elements with academic qualifications found themselves in class I. The government retained with a vengeance the class distinction inside the jail and attempted to humiliate, insult the working class.

It is obvious that the CC members outside as well as inside were alien to this understanding. Their understanding was a reformist understanding—as it was a question of a few minor demands and not a question involving an entire class. They neither saw the government's attempt to attack and intimidate our class, nor did they see the insult to our own class. Years of reformism had made all of them alien to any sense of pride in the working class; had made them insensitive to any affront and insult to the



working class; had made them such hardened reformists that they were prepared to accept and introduce class distinctions inside the party. Their refusal to see the class character of the offensive was nothing but a shamefaced acceptance of class distinction inside the party.

The elementary duty of every communist worth his salt, every communist loyal to the working class was to defeat this class offensive, this attempt to intimidate the new militants from the working class, this attempt to force surrender of the militants by starving their wives and children. It was not a question of jail treatment in the ordinary sense, but of the freedom of working class struggle of the right to fight for the cause of the working class and communism without one's wife and children being starved as reprisals. It was a part of this freedom that the party demands for conducting the class war against the bourgeoisie.

It is obvious that no sacrifice will be too great, too much in this battle. If a communist is not capable of sacrificing his utmost in such a cause, he must be declared to be incapable of fighting for anything worth fighting for. But what was the attitude of Yeravda jail CCMs?

When the government stopped forced feeding they got panicky, they worked themselves into a frenzy over the stopping of forced feeding and said this was a diabolical plot to kill them; they sent panicky letters outside to get somehow the hunger strike withdrawn, and seek the intervention of N.M.Joshi, Shankarrao, More, anybody. 'Save us at all costs' was their slogan. Their importunate requests began to assume the form of ultimatums as time passed by and they were aided in this by Dange who sent similar ultimatums from Nasik jail.

During the course of last eighteen months party members in jails in all provinces have carried on several hunger strikes. In all of these the ranks, 99 per cent of our party members, have fought heroically, courageously and the party is justly proud of them.

In these struggles there have been waverings and vacillations, but there has not yet been another instance of such open and gross cowardice and panic on the part of the leadership—as in the case of the Nasik and Yeravda jail CCMs.

What was the argument advanced by the CCMs in Yeravda jail in demanding withdrawal of the hunger strike? They were not in a position to continue the hunger strike without running the risk of death or being maimed. They were frightened at the prospect of death or even incapacitation — none of the CCMs was on strike both it seems were exempted. They, supported by the jail committee perhaps, were of the opinion that the question of abolition of classification, of family allowances for the families of hundreds of workers, of defeating the intimidating game of the Congress government, of fighting the class discrimination against the working class was not worth sacrificing their precious lives, or even inviting physical incapacitation. Such was their faith in the cause they were fighting for. Such was their respect for the working class; their anger against the treatment of working class detenus, their own comrades, members of the same party.

The refusal to risk life or physical injury is nothing but the announcement of open desertion of the class fight, open desertion by petty-bourgeois elements of the working class. This and nothing else is the class meaning of the cowardly withdrawal. The vacillations of the petty-bourgeoisie are reflected inside the party leadership in jail, since the leadership is mostly composed of these elements.

The abolition of classification was not a demand impossible of achievement as is imagined by the leaders. The ranks in Bombay perhaps do not know that classification has been abolished in Bengal and Madras so far as detenus are concerned — a fact which ought to show to everybody that it is a demand easy of achievement provided sufficient fighting capacity and faith in the cause is there.

If the leaders of Yeravda and Nasik jails, if the CCMs, had decided to continue the strike never minding the consequences, if they had shown an uncompromising spirit from the beginning and had not raised hope in the minds of the officials that the hunger strike could be easily broken, they would have definitely won. If in the course of the struggle, whether successful or unsuccessful, there had been martyrs—they would have died in a cause worth dying for, a cause for which it is an honour and privilege to die—the cause of the working class.

But nothing was further from the minds of the leadership at Nasik and Yeravda jails than the duty of sacrificing lives in this cause. From the beginning the leadership which mostly comes from class I—the privileged class—looked upon the fight as only the fight of class II. Dange openly puts it in so many words. The chits written by Ghosh from Yeravda jail also betray the same idea. Repeatedly in his chits Ghosh writes about growing numbers of class II prisoners giving up the strike—an emphasis which has no other meaning than this that those for whom they were fighting are themselves giving up the strike; any further continuation is meaningless. Such was their attitude to the struggle.

Besides the argument of Yeravda jail leaders that because a number of class II prisoners were giving up hunger strike, the strike should be withdrawn, was a false argument. It was false because it was the bounden duty of class I prisoners to continue the hunger strike even if the entire class II prisoners had given up the strike. It was a joint struggle and continued resistance by class I would have counted, and would have rallied back the class II detenus.

Secondly, the majority of class II prisoners were not in Yeravda jail and it was impermissible to demand withdrawal on the basis of vacillations among class II detenus in that jail.

Thirdly, practically the entire number of class II prisoners in Yeravda were non-party peasants who had hardly come into contact with the party, and they were bound to vacillate. To base oneself on the vacillations of this mass was to seek cover to hide one's own vacillations.

Fourthly, the majority of party ranks drawn from the working class were either in Nasik or Worli jails and Ghosh does not even remember them—though they constituted the majority of class II detenus.

Thus it will be seen that every excuse was sought to stage a retreat and justify it one way or the other.

It might be in other jails also there might have been vacillations among class II prisoners. This was natural since there was only a weak and hesitating lead from the beginning. But that is no reason why the CCMs should have vacillated. If they found

vacillations growing they should have thrown themselves in the struggle. Both Ghosh and Ghate, though they were exempted in the beginning, should have joined the struggle when the decisive point had been reached.

The PB holds that the CCMs concerned showed petty-bourgeois funk when they were called upon to fight for the working class; because of their alien class outlook the fight for the working class became unreal to them; they therefore lacked conviction and became panicky just when the struggle was reaching a decisive point, its climax.

The PB holds that the strike could have continued for many more days if the CCMs concerned had placed themselves at the head and given a decisive lead.

Following this, the Yeravda CCMs, unanimously supported by the jail committee, have come out most shamelessly in favour of non-resistance or formal passive resistance to the segregation move of the government. They reject the principle of militant forms of resistance in jail and proclaim the opportunist theory that in jails only hunger strikes, or other forms of passive resistance—they call it defensive resistance—should be undertaken. To escape being charged with advocating non-violent passive resistance out and out, they talk of resistance with bare fists etc., or with whatever might come into their hands. This is nothing but a conscience-saving clause. In the context of the fact that they reject as a matter of principle militant resistance and also preparation before hand for organising such resistance, their talk of resistance with bare fists etc. is only a plea for organised passive resistance and nothing else. In this they only ape the bourgeois leader Gandhiji who permitted women to resist with hands allowed scratching with finger-nails and biting with teeth. Gandhiji was right in describing these forms of resistance as non-violent for they constitute only symbolic resistance.

In their degenerate reformism the Yeravda CCMs advocate this thinly-veiled non-resistance and reject as a matter of principle militant resistance and all organised preparation for it.

That these comrades reject as a matter of principle any preparation for serious and militant resistance is clear from the

following : "The form that we decided upon was one which can be called defensive resistance. This is, we would gather at one place, raise slogans and refuse to be separated and locked up. If they attacked us, we would defend ourselves with bare fists, snatch away their lathis if we could, etc. but would not collect stones and sticks, hurl them at the police." It is unbelievable that such nauseating stuff should be written by two CCMs and should be supported by a number of PCMs in August 1949 when the party ranks and masses under party's leadership have waged heroic battles inside and outside the jails.

The Yeravda CCMs reject in principle any serious preparation for resistance to the police. Of course they seek to cover the cowardice of their policy by talking about snatching lathis of the police. It is easy to understand that those who reject as a matter of principle organisation of militant resistance will never succeed in snatching the lathis of the police.

The Yeravda CCMs further consider it absolutely essential that the police must first attack them before they could lift their little finger against them. This is how they argue: "The point is whether right from the beginning we should make a different plan—a plan of collecting stones etc., not allowing the police to come near our barracks by hurling them at them, not waiting for them to attack us but seize the initiative ourselves."

The Yeravda CCMs are afraid of seizing the initiative; they want the police to seize the initiative. This is the crux of their line. And for them the police attack begins not when the police begin to approach your barracks with lathis and rifles—but only when they start splitting your heads, when they have already entered your yard and carried the attack in your citadel; for them the attack starts when it is already half finished and you are at a complete disadvantage. This is the same theory as Joshi's who said, "Don't resist till the police start burning your houses and raping your women" i.e. when the police have finished you and your resistance. This is not a theory of any resistance but a proposal to liquidate all resistance and that too in a typical treacherous fifth-columnist manner.

The Yeravda CCMs do not realise that what they are advocating is treacherous sabotage of all resistance and are only repeating Joshi's treacherous arguments in his notorious "Pol-Org Letter" of February 1947.

The Yeravda CCMs repudiate preparation for militant resistance and are opposed in principle to the very idea of militant resistance. They openly state that it is not possible in jail and should not be resorted to. They write : "We think that broadly speaking the two forms of struggle that can be adopted in jails are hunger strike and demonstrations. About the former we need not say anything. It is accepted by all that this is one of the most important forms of jail struggle. About the latter, *viz* demonstrations there are differences about the forms. We include all physical resistance in this category because no matter what methods we use ultimately the government force can and will overpower us unless our action has created such resistance against government outside that it abandons the particular policy which led to the action—say transfer. They are therefore in the nature of demonstrations.

"Now the question is—what should be the nature of these actions? Even after the most careful deliberations, we are definitely of the opinion that they should be of the nature of defensive resistance—not symbolic resistance of the type of satyagraha but defensive resistance to the utmost of our strength even if it leads to firing."

The bogus character of the defensive resistance advocated is already unmasked. The talk about firing or defensive resistance being different from satyagraha cannot be taken seriously. All that stands out is that there is to be no militant resistance.

To reach this reformist conclusion, wrong arguments and conceptions about demonstrations are introduced. What do the Yeravda CCMs mean by describing all forms of struggles other than hunger strike—including militant forms—as demonstrations? What they mean is that hunger-strike is the only real struggle which leads to success while every other form is just a token protest, the militant form leads only to being overpowered by the enemy. The word demonstration is not used here in the sense

of a higher form of struggle leading to clash with the police and grim fighting; but in the Congress, bourgeois-liberal sense of a token or constitutional protest. The line of reasoning is this—all forms of struggle other than hunger strike are not real struggles, but just token protests, and therefore too much repression in them, loss of life etc. should be avoided.

That this is the idea in calling everything else than hunger strike demonstration is clear from the following, given in explanation of the characterisation of the forms as demonstration: "Ultimately the government forces can and will overpower us unless our action has created such resistance against government ... They are therefore in the nature of demonstrations."

Thus the demarcating line between the hunger strike and militant forms of resistance is this—that the latter is bound to be overpowered, therefore can never succeed, therefore wards militant forms of struggle. What the Yeravda CCMs have come forward with an unbridled apology for non-violent struggle—for hunger strike as the sole weapon.

At the same time this is an openly defeatist attitude towards militant forms of struggle. What the Yeravda CCMs are advocating is nothing new. The entire bourgeois gentry in the days of their oppositional politics has taken the same attitude to all forms of violent resistance, whether inside or outside the jail. They had argued that this causes the struggle to collapse. It was nothing but a plea to adjure revolutionary methods of struggle.

It is besides untrue to suggest that militant forms of struggle meet only with defeat. This is what all reformists seek to make out. The Yeravda CCMs join the ranks of such reformists. It is not necessary to quote the international experience of mass struggles or our own experience in this connection. To refer to them is enough to expose the utterly reformist character of the arguments advanced, though they are supposedly advanced in connection with jail struggles only.

The experience of jail struggles itself shows that the Yeravda CCMs understand nothing about them. In Bengal the militant resistance organised by the jail comrades, which led to barricading of barracks, fighting from inside the barracks and

death of four comrades, did not lead to the prisoners being defeated—but to panic in the ranks of the government who had to come out with an assurance that the terms of the previous agreement will be implemented. Formally it appeared as if the prisoners were defeated, because the barracks were taken possession of by the police, but the reality was otherwise. And far from demoralising the prisoners, the clash made them more angry and they embarked upon another hunger strike to demand inquiry into police firing. There was no one in Bengal to raise the slogan 'the police are seeking to exterminate us, let us therefore save ourselves.'

The Yeravda CCMs unconsciously compare the prolonged character of the hunger strike with the shortlived character of militant forms of struggle and think that in the latter there is no chance of victory. No one has suggested that militant forms of resistance can be as protracted as a hunger strike. That is why no one has suggested that it should be the sole weapon on all occasions. The proper attitude is that in the present revolutionary period and the mood of the masses, in the present stage of fight against the government, such resistance often is the only deterrent against the government, and helps to rouse our class, and unmask the government far more effectively, and warns the government not to continue its repressive attitude to the political prisoners. It is a deterrent because such resistance makes it clear to the government that its policy can be executed only through a deluge of blood, and the Nehru government dare not repeat blood-baths in jail without rousing the hatred of the people against itself and undermining its existence. This has been seen in the streets of Calcutta where literally we have won through sheer defiance of police firing, facing repeated police firing and forcing the government to retreat. The Nehru government and its jail administration will be shaken provided our comrades have faith in themselves and the people.

Militant forms of resistance is thus concentrated resistance, the climax of resistance which unmasks the fascist face of the Nehru government, rouses the indignation of our people outside and steels the struggle inside. Its plan and organisation are



incumbent on all revolutionaries. Obviously a lot of initiative and discretion will be with the committees on the spot to decide on which issues to resort to this form of struggle. From outside only such patent issues as transfer to concentration camps or segregation can be indicated. Obviously there will be many more issues which will necessitate the use of this form of struggle. The choice of issues, and of the forms of struggle, will generally remain with the committees on the spot. The party outside will not always be in a position to indicate which form of struggle is to be adopted in a specific case—except on such broad issues as transfer, segregation etc. Issues may crop up suddenly, developments may take place suddenly, necessitating immediate action. That is why though through frequent consultation the guidance of the party can be made available, yet there will be many occasions on which decisions will have to be taken on the spot. And these will be on correct lines only in so far as there is a complete repudiation of the opportunist line advocated by the Yeravda CCMs.

The PB cannot but take note of the fact that the document of Yeravda CCMs is not an ordinary document. It attempts to sit in judgement in the heroic struggles carried on in other jails, belittles, in typical reformist fashion, the revolutionary importance of the Sabarmati jail-struggle and puts forward a line which in effect asks the PB to repudiate all the militant fights carried on by our heroic comrades in jail.

This is what they write : "Till now it is the former type of resistance—that which we have called defensive resistance—that we thought the proper form of struggle. But reports of the clashes that have taken place in various jails have made us think over the whole question afresh. And we are giving you below our considered opinion—the opinion of our committee." It is thus clear that they have sent their opportunist line as an alternative to the line adopted in other jails with which they do not agree.

Instead of feeling inspired by the resistance in other jails and examining their own opprtunist practice, they sit in judgement over others, and blame them for not following their opportunist practice.

And they further slander the heroic Sabarmati comrades as follows : "The brutality of the firing at Sabarmati clearly shows that what the government is out to do is to physically exterminate or permanently incapacitate as many of our comrades as possible. And we feel that we should not adopt a form of struggle which facilitates the execution of this plan."

So the Sabarmati comrades are guilty of facilitating the execution of the enemy's plan. The same provocation, theory of Joshi to slander all militant resistance, all those who defy death. It is on the same plane as Joshi's slander of Vayalar and Punnappa heroes. The PB condemns the comrades for indulging in these slanderous assertions which only show that they cannot even appreciate revolutionary fights—much less enact them.

This slanderous interpretation however is not accidental. This is in, reality, the essence of their criticism of all militant actions in jail. They want to denounce them as acts of provocation which only help the enemy. And this method of opposing revolutionary actions is not new. It is the Joshian method of presenting sabotage of the revolutionary movement as defence of the party. It is the Joshian theory of denouncing militant actions as provocative actions. The trick is done by concentrating attention on the acts of repression, by falsely presenting that through such repression the class enemy is getting stronger, the people are going down, and by concealing the heroism of those who fight, the basic causes—the desperate conditions, rising consciousness which make people fight and face death and screening the truth that it is the government, the class enemy, that is getting isolated through such struggles and the masses and their party that get united, more determined. That the Yeravda jail committee should resurrect this nauseating theory of Joshi in August 1949 shows that they are deep in the mire of reformism.

This kind of reformism finds every excuse and uses every argument to shirk militant battles. It pretends to plead in the name of the safety of the party, safety of its cadres, in the name of avoiding too many losses. The Yeravda committee all the while avers that they are not afraid, that they are prepared for all eventualities, but in the end oppose militant struggle. At one

place they oppose such action because they say there will be severe losses on our side, while the enemy will hardly suffer any loss, thus making it appear as if they are out for inflicting losses on the enemy. But this is mere pretence. They do not want to make any serious preparation, they refuse to do it and use the argument of unequal battle only to liquidate all militant resistance.

These comrades repeatedly aver that they are prepared to defend the honour of the party by risking death or physical injury. But their plea is that they should be shot down while offering non-violent resistance. They write : " It is also very likely that they will shoot us down even when we do not collect stones and sticks, even when our resistance does not go beyond defending ourselves with bare hands and snatching away lathis. They who shoot down the women demonstrators at Calcutta may shoot down prisoners at the very first sign of resistance... Whenever they do that, we have to get hold of whatever we can get on the spot and hit back as best as we can. But that is not the same thing as collecting stones and brick-bats beforehand, hurling them when the police approach our barrack etc., and thus make firing inevitable." This is a plea that at best we are prepared to be shot down without resistance, but not by offering resistance.

But even this pose of being prepared to die in non-violent resistance is a false pose. The non-violent resistance is suggested precisely to escape firing, escape death. They say militant forms make firing inevitable and hence they are opposed to it. Non-violent forms make it at most likely, and they may escape it. They themselves draw the dividing line between the two in this way—not by reference to the needs of the class struggle but by reference to what will inflict less injury on them.

That it is the fear of consequences that dominates the mind of the Yeravda committee is clear from the following. They write, "Barricades inside jail become veritable death-traps and not a means of defence or offence when murderous fire is opened because you cannot retreat, you cannot manoeuvre, you cannot take shelter." It is difficult to understand what they mean by barricade fighting. No one has asked jail comrades to raise barricades in the jail maidan, or central square. The Bengal

comrades barricaded their barracks, and perhaps their yards. They have not yet complained it was a death-trap. Those who want to fight find out the ways and means of doing it. And of course they choose the most advantageous ground that they can have.

But the reality is that these comrades want the party to sanction the hunger strike as the method of struggle, and token demonstrations as auxiliary aids. They write, "We feel that the objects that we have in view—exposing the government and rousing the people against it, demonstrating our courage and determination and winning respect and admiration for the party—these objects can be realised by hunger strikes and by the form of demonstration that we have proposed—a form of action that corresponds to our strength and to the situation inside the jails." Thus hunger strike is proclaimed as the weapon and all militant resistance rejected. We, at the same time, know what type of hunger strike the leaders conducted. It must be recorded at the same time that it is totally untrue to say that only hunger strike and token demonstrations correspond to our strength and situation inside the jails. The most militant forms of resistance also correspond to our strength inside the jail provided we have the courage to use it. No one has suggested that only militant forms correspond to our strength inside the jails. The Bengal comrades who faced militant battle against the police, subsequently resorted to hunger strike also to enforce an impartial committee of inquiry into police firing.

The crux of the Yeravda line lies in this—at all costs devise that form of struggle which will guarantee against death or physical incapacitation. During the non-violent hunger strike, which according to them corresponds to their strength and situation in jail, they were not prepared to be maimed or to die and withdraw the hunger strike in panic.

And now when the question of militant forms comes they again reject them by saying that they make firing inevitable, they are death-traps, they lead to loss of cadres.

It is obvious that though they repeatedly aver that they are prepared to die in the cause of the party, their real demand is neither death nor injury in non-violent or violent struggle. The

PB rejects their line of argument as opportunist and counter-revolutionary, as sabotage of all resistance.

The Yeravda committee wants the PB to lay down the form of struggles in jail today. It is significant that the request comes from Yeravda only. Comrades in a number of jails have understood the party line correctly without a special reference to the PB and offered militant resistance on their own on several occasions. Comrades in Bengal, Cawnpore, Vellore, Cuddalore, Sabarmati jails acted correctly in offering the resistance that they did.

The guiding line of the PB should be clear beyond doubt from what is stated in criticism of the Yeravda document. The PB further adds that the situation is such that even the most militant forms of struggle are often necessary and justified. They often constitute the only weapon to force the enemy to retreat and defeat his offensive. Any one who rejects them as a matter of principle or continues to repudiate them in practice while professing loyalty to them in principle has no place inside the party.

At the same time it is obvious that the militant resistance, climaxing the resistance of the prisoners, cannot be resorted to every day. Therefore the other forms of struggle like hunger strike etc. are not obsolete, but are still valuable. The opportunist tendency to reject militant resistance and stick to hunger strike alone should be consciously fought.

If the Yeravda comrades change their understanding completely they will find no difficulty in making the choice of forms according to the situation. They themselves will come to the conclusion that on such matters as transfer to concentration camps or segregation—the militant forms are necessary and justified.

The PB further wishes to impress on the Yeravda and other leaders that their cowardly conduct of the hunger strike has emboldened the enemy and made him confident that the communists can be made to quail before death and repression. The fact that the brutal firing in Sabarmati jail only creates in the committee members the feeling that we must have adopted

wrong forms of struggle shows demoralisation before repression and panic. It shows that unless the committee completely repudiates its reformist outlook, the game of Morarji & Co to intimidate the prisoners will succeed.

Thanks to the cowardly conduct of the hunger strike and the persistence of reformist outlook, the struggle of political prisoners in Bombay is already put in danger. When resistance is organised again it is bound to be met with ferocious violence, for the enemy hopes to secure a swift victory over the prisoners. Brutal firing as in Sabarmati jail may be enacted again. An insane bourgeoisie, when it hopes to secure quick victory may go to any extent. However the repression can be beaten back if the members walk into the battle with determination and remove the handicaps that the leadership has created through its surrenderist policy. The PB holds no rosy prospects. It warns however against losing morale and interpreting repression and death as the enemy's victory.

The PB warns the Yeravda and other leaders that the way in which they conducted the hunger strike gave a setback to the struggle of politicals all over India, emboldening the enemy and creating hopes that more repression would force the surrender of communists. Against this the comrades in other provinces are heroically fighting. The enemy is constantly probing for weak spots and wants to take advantage of every weakness in our ranks, every chink in our armour. The heroic and prolonged resistance of our comrades in jails has discredited the government both at home and abroad and it seeks to silence the voice of the political prisoners in every way.

The government did not expect such widespread flare-up and prolonged fights in jail. This opening of a new front against the government threw them in panic. They knew their own weak position in dealing with this front. Though the bourgeois press may blackout all news about political, repression against prisoners gets known and discredits the government. The fact that the government resorts to open lies in its statements on hunger strikes shows that it is afraid even of the petty-bourgeois public opinion which is very sensitive to ill-treatment of politicals.

The fact that governments make concessions to the politicals and at the same time declare that no concessions were made shows that they are afraid of owning defeat lest it might lead to struggles elsewhere.

The struggle of political prisoners is an important part of the struggle against the Nehru government. The government is vulnerable on this front. At such a time weakness in our ranks, and lack of confidence, persistence of reformism, constitute heinous crimes amounting to strike-breaking and joining the enemy.

Continuing their opportunist line the Yeravda CCMs, supported by the jail committee, reach the lowest depth of reformism in their letter, which is in reply to a circular sent by the CCMs in Bombay.

The circular from outside drew the attention of the jail comrades to the fact that the government was transferring class II detenues to Nasik jail to completely segregate them and the preparation for transferring them to detention camp outside the province.

The circular calls on all detenues to resist such transfer and asks them to follow up the glorious traditions set by our comrades in West Bengal, Vellore and Salem. It asks them to fight with every weapon that they can secure and make proper preparation for such a fight.

The circular puts the issue very mildly. It calls upon the jail comrades to do the most obvious thing, to resist in the same way as comrades elsewhere have done. It specifically states that the government's move is directed specially against the worker and peasant prisoners, that it is a class measure.

None except one who is completely alien to all sense of class feeling and class pride will fail to realise the importance of fight at all costs on this issue. None except one who has developed blue funk at the prospect of a grim struggle will object to following in the tradition of the West Bengal comrades, or preparing for the battle in the way indicated.

The Yeravda CCMs and jail committee members have covered themselves with disgrace by violently objecting to the circular

and direction on principle and have betrayed the fact that they are not only ideologically confused but get frightened at the prospect of offering any serious resistance in jail.

In this letter they repeat all the nauseating arguments of the earlier arguments and add a few more bogus and opportunist arguments thoroughly unworthy of serious revolutionaries.

Without the least sense of shame they repeat the slander about Sabarmati and have the effrontery to state that the happenings since Sabarmati have further strengthened their views. Demanding all abandonment of the struggle against segregation, against the open discrimination against the working class prisoners and slandering the Sabarmati struggle, these petty-bourgeois leaders write: "The real issue which led to the clash at Sabarmati—the plan of Deoli—has not come at all before public because the clash took place on the issue of transfer to Yeravda. Similar clashes in other jails on the same issue i.e. transfer to jails within the province will not lead to any better result, will not help to bring the issue of Deoli to the forefront. Precious lives will be lost, scores of comrades will be maimed and incapacitated for life—that is precisely what the government wants while the real issue remains hidden from the public eye. It is not merely a question of demonstrating that communists can face death, it is also a question of focusing attention on the specific issue of Deoli or transfer outside the province. And this will not be helped by the course of action given in the letter".

Once more the same fear about death and being maimed, though this time this fear is attempted to be screened by repeated references to the necessity of bringing the issue before the public.

Secondly, it is nothing but a barefaced lie to suggest that all that Sabarmati has achieved is loss of precious lives. It is obvious that the CCMs in Yeravda are not only not inspired by the Sabarmati heroism but have got frightened. But all honest party members everywhere, in jail or outside, all those near the party who have heard the heroic story of Sabarmati, and all those honest people who have come to know about the story despite the press blackout have become indignant and the party ranks and party following have become steeled in their resolve to fight the Nehru government.



The Sabarmati struggle has also unmasked the brutality of the Nehru government and made the government waver, just as it did in Bengal after the shootings in streets and jail. The Sabarmati comrades through their martyrdom have rescued the prestige of the party which was so cheaply sold by the Yeravda CCMs in the last hunger strike.

The Sabarmati struggle has thus brought before the people a far more important issue than the transfer to Deoli—the brutality and fascist character of the government.

What are the Yeravda CCMs, supported by the jail committee, driving at? What they seek is to abjure all struggle against segregation, against concentration of class I and class II prisoners in different jails preparatory to transfer to places outside the province. This is how they put their demand in cold blood: "The direction to resist all transfers to Nasik and Yeravda on the plea that government is planning Deoli is one which takes no account of the issue that is there before the public nor the sentiments of the prisoners." If the Yeravda CCMs want to suggest that transfer to Deoli is a mere rumour spread by the party outside, if they have got reliable information that the government has no such intention, they should say so. Further they should also prove that the government has no intention of segregating the class II prisoners. If they prove this, then the question of transfer may be treated according to the decisions of each jail committee or the tastes of individuals.

In the absence of such a proof the refusal to fight against transfer is refusal to fight against segregation, against preparatory steps to transfer outside the province. In Bengal at least the government is making secret preparations to transfer the detenus to Buxa camp. The Bombay government must be making similar preparations—since it is all-India policy.

Under these circumstances not to fight in a militant way against segregational transfer or preparatory transfer—is nothing but open treachery and the Yeravda CCMs are advocating it. Their tactic is to postpone all struggle to the point at which its organisation becomes impossible.

Of course this time in typical Joshian manner sabotage is advocated in the name of making the issue clear to the people.

They should remember one thing— the people are not fools and they easily understand the fight against segregation, the fight against transfer to places outside the province. If the Sabarmati comrades had made transfer to Yeravda the only issue even that would have been understood by the people since it was one of the demands of the hunger strike that the political prisoners should be kept within their districts.

In their desire to run away from militant struggles the Yeravda comrades go to ridiculous length, and declare that even if the government was forced to withdraw all plans of transfer to outside the province through militant resistance, this is not good enough. "We want to stress that even if after a series of jail clashes the government drops the idea of transfer to Deoli it will not have fully served our purpose. What we want to do is not merely to defeat the ordinance, we also want the people to see and recognise that it has been defeated. The government should not be able to argue afterwards that it never meant to transfer the Bombay prisoners to Deoli".

The Yeravda CCMs could have as well argued that the best way of demonstrating to the people that the government has been defeated on the question of Deoli was first to allow themselves to be transferred to Deoli and start the fight back. They would not have looked more ridiculous than what they do by advancing the present argument. The defeat of the government's plan of transfer to Deoli will not serve our purpose fully, if resistance starts at the preparatory stage when the authorities are transferring prisoners to one or two jails for purposes of transferring to Deoli; even if such resistance compels the government to abandon its plan because of sheer militancy of resistance of the prisoners, clashes and sacrifices of lives. Why? Because in abandoning its plan the government might come out with a communique saying it had no intention transferring anyone to Deoli and thus people will not see that the government is defeated. Such is their argument. The people however are far more politically conscious and intelligent than what the Yeravda CCMs concede. The people if they see the government coming out with a communique after bloody clashes will draw their own

conclusions and consider the government communique to be a lying communique, for the people know that communists do not sacrifice their lives for the mere pleasure of it. They take the Communist Party to be a serious revolutionary party and its members to be serious revolutionaries. The people will draw exactly the opposite conclusion. They will say that the government is defeated and is only saving face. The Yeravda CCMs are not political infants and they should understand that this and nothing else has been our own experience on similar occasions. But perhaps by people the Yeravda CCMs unconsciously mean the immediate followers of the bourgeoisie—and their periphery. They forget that people include workers, peasants, honest sections of petty-bourgeoisie, all of whom will not fail to be stirred by the repeated fights, which cannot be concealed, and will draw the correct conclusions from a whitewashing communique.

Screening one's own reformism and cowardice by throwing the blame on the people and their lack of consciousness is an old Joshian trick and the Yeravda CCMs are guilty of repeating it. The ridiculous assertion that even if the government's plan is defeated it is not worth much is however not accidental. It is part of the reformist propaganda against militant forms of struggle, which the Yeravda CCMs want the party to abjure at all costs. Throughout the world the reformists attempt to shatter faith in a militant forms in a number of ways. They propagate that adoption of militant forms of resistance means sure defeat; if this does not cut much ice they propagate that it may lead to success but you have to pay too heavy a price; you can achieve the same result through nonviolent struggle; if this dose not cut ice they state that the victory achieved through militant means is not worth much. The Yeravda CCMs adopt all these arguments as it suits them. Their only aim is to create lack of faith in militant resistance.

What is the master plan that they suggest in opposition to the instructions sent from outside? Do not resist segregational transfers—they include such transfers under the innocuous term transfer inside the province and screen (i) transfers of class II are more likely to be segregational than otherwise, (ii) resist

only when after segregation is complete and orders for transfer to a prison outside the province or to a place like Karwar come, and (iii) then offer only passive resistance, "defensive resistance", but on no account militant resistance. Militant resistance was rejected as a matter of principle.

That this is nothing but the tactics of giving the enemy and easy victory, the tactics of deliberate sabotage of all resistance, is clear beyond doubt.

To throw dust in the eyes of others the Yeravda CCMs make an attempt to present their viewpoint under Marxist terminology. The kind of "Marxism" that they propound has however nothing to do with Marxism-Leninism.

In defence of their own opportunism they mock at the party outside, at its failure to mobilise the people, little imagining that perhaps outside also the same malady that has struck them might be responsible for the state of affairs.

They further fail to realise that others also might have failed to make a turn towards revolutionary line and methods of organisation and struggle, and therefore might be finding themselves unable to break through the difficulties of the period of illegality.

They wrongly charge that the letter sent from outside means that the form of struggle has no relation to the stage of the movement outside. They do this because in typical reformist manner they forget the revolutionary period, the happenings throughout India, the fight waged by their own comrades in jails in other provinces. They reduce the stage of the movement to mean the local happenings or lack of happenings in the city of Bombay and conveniently forget the struggle of Telangana, the resistance in Kerala, Andhra, Tamil Nadu, the repeated clashes in the streets of Calcutta, the glorious resistance in the villages of Bengal as in Midnapore where protracted battles are going on, the repeated attacks by peasant masses, peasant women, to rescue communist leaders from the clutches of the police. The letter of the Bombay CCMs gave the instruction in the background of this situation, and in the background of the revolutionary period. The Yeravda comrades, intent on

opportunist practice at all costs, conveniently forget the revolutionary period that is leading to repeated clashes all over India including Maharashtra, the Erangaon shooting—and want to argue that only non-violent resistance, sabotage of resistance, corresponds to the stage of movement outside. They only use the weakness of Bombay and Maharashtra committees to suit their own purpose, and demand a ban on all militant resistance. And this is what they call using such forms of struggle as correspond to the stage of movement outside. In reality their demand is to adjust the forms of struggle to the disorganisation and backwardness of certain party units and not to the advanced units of the party as a whole or to the mood of the fighting masses, or the stage of class struggle in the country.

In reality the Yeravda CCMs repudiate the existence of a revolutionary period and revolutionary happenings in the country. For having made the formulation that the form of struggle must correspond to stage of movement outside and conditions inside the jail, they demand that militant forms of struggle must be eschewed all over India—thus making it plain that in their opinion they do not correspond to the stage of the movement or conditions in jail anywhere in India. It is thus clear that they repudiate the revolutionary period, the revolutionary perspective and the fighting and revolutionary battles of Telangana. This is where their Marxism leads.

Besides, it is an elementary error to attempt to deduce the stage of the movement from the failure or success of popular response to a specific issue. Organisational mistakes apart, there are several other factors which determine the response of the masses on specific issues. As the influence of the party advances and revolutionary consciousness grows, the response of the masses on vital and major issues will be more and more uniform. But even then the ups and downs are inevitable. To attempt to deduce the stage of the movement outside from the fact that no demonstration appeared before Arthur Road prison when the IGP visited the jail again, or from the fact that there could be no protest strike on 11 May is nothing but arrant nonsense.

Judged by this standard we should have liquidated Telangana long ago. What direct action could the party do in support of Telangana? What could it do except popularising and spreading its message and fighting the slanders? What active popular response could be created in support of Telangana? A protest strike, general strike? Could it be organised even today? In this state of popular response would we have been justified in liquidating resistance, saying Telangana does not correspond to the all-India stage of the movement? It would have been the grossest act of betrayal.

Telangana fights on and continues to inspire thousands of working class and peasant fighters. And though they are not able to organise actions directly in support of Telangana, they start their own fights against the common enemy and help Telangana. Who will deny that the Calcutta masses have hardly done anything direct to support Telangana? And yet who will deny that their own repeated fights and clashes have helped Telangana and reflect the same revolutionary mood heading towards climax? No one will be justified in saying that since on the issue of Telangana there could be no militant actions, neither Telangana nor militant actions correspond to the stage of the movement and should be abandoned. And yet this is what amounts to the line of Yeravda CCMs.

When thinking about the popular response our comrades seem to forget that they are fighting as communists, and not as part of the bourgeois oppositional movement, and that they are fighting quite different forces than in the past, that organising popular response means in Bombay today—rallying mass support directly for communists against the Congress government, by overcoming the effective resistance of socialists who control key cadres in working class areas, and overcoming the press blackout.

If the Bombay committee had been free from reformist practice and organisational methods, if it had carried on its agitation correctly, if it had seized the advantage of the big rally on 1 May to announce the date of protest strike, if it had combined revolutionary organisational methods of work and if the Yeravda and other leaders had not withdrawn the strike precipitatedly in a panic—there is no doubt that there would have been big

response. It must be remembered that not only the comrades outside failed the workers, but the leaders of the hunger strike failed them by withdrawing the hunger strike just when the situation was reaching a climax and the issue was being forced on the attention of the public. The Yeravda comrades criticise the comrades outside but forget their own role in creating the mess. And it is now their demand that the mess which they and the committees outside have created should be taken to be correctly representing the stage of the movement and forms of resistance should be adjusted to it.

The Yeravda CCMs besides have got a totally wrong idea about the relation between the jail struggle and popular movement and response outside. They fail to see the independent role and responsibility of the jail struggle in exposing the government, rousing the public and forcing a compromise and surrender on the government. No doubt the direct support from outside led by the party is a powerful weapon of inflicting defeat on the government, and of linking the struggle inside with the struggle outside. No doubt the struggle of political prisoners is a very important political struggle and party committees who fail to make a serious endeavour to mobilise support behind it must be held guilty of sabotaging the struggle. The failure of the Bombay and Maharashtra committees to mobilise support was no doubt a serious affair. But the hunger strike had a powerful weapon of appealing to the public, to the working class—their own hunger strike—a weapon which would have forced the government sooner or later to sue for a compromise besides giving the party outside continuous opportunity to mobilise popular support. Of course all this could not be accomplished without the risk of maiming or death—and that was the rub.

The collapse of the plans outside put greater responsibilities on the leaders of the hunger strike. They failed to rise to their responsibilities. They failed because they forgot the independent role of jail struggles to rouse the people, because they forgot the strength of jail struggles in forcing a compromise or surrender on the government, forgot that hunger strike was a direct weapon of appealing to the public against the government.

They failed because they had a wrong reformist idea about the relation between the jail struggle and people outside. Their outlook amounts to considering that the struggle inside jail is purely symbolic, while the real fighting is to be done by the masses or the party outside, and that also to be done before anyone runs the risk of death or being maimed. They are importing the understanding of Congressmen who carried on mock fights in jail, were supported by the oppositional press outside, resulting in petty compromises. This and nothing else emerges from the documents sent by the CCMs and the arguments advanced by them.

Further it must be stated that the overwhelmingly large number of our jail comrades have fought their battles without the advantage of street clashes, street demonstrations, etc. as in Calcutta. They have continued to rouse the people through their protests and sufferings, and generally forced compromises or surrender on the government. Neither in Calcutta nor anywhere else the hunger strike of our comrades or firing on them could be backed by a general protest strike of workers. The lack of this support from the working class, or visible demonstrations in other provinces, was not made an excuse to withdraw the hunger strike, and give up reliance on the strength of resistance from inside the jail. The comrades in places other than Calcutta had to fight under conditions different from Calcutta and they did not get unnerved. They correctly saw the independent strength and role of their hunger strike and carried on their obligation to defend the rights of political prisoners and the prestige of the party.

The Yeravda CCMs thus forget the basic duty and role of the prisoners' fight, their own independent strength and want to reduce their fight to mere symbolic resistance with the people doing the main fighting.

In support of their opportunist line the Yeravda comrades refer to Stalin and Lenin, though they refrain from citing any quotations and that is good. For they will not find a single quotation to justify their opportunist policy. Their argument briefly is this—fighting the jail battles through militant forms of struggle, which according to them do not correspond to the stage of the movement and which may not win the support of certain



non-party elements in Yeravda jail, is fighting the government with the party's own cadres, fighting with the vanguard alone. Hence it is not in conformity with the teachings of Lenin and Stalin. It would appear as if the party had asked these comrades to organise a revolution on their own in jail and establish political power. However no such absurd demand has been made. All that the party cadres have been asked is to resist in a militant way attempt to segregate working class prisoners and attempts to transfer them to detention camps. Who else but the party cadres in jail who form the overwhelming majority can fight this battle? And if certain non-party elements do not join in this battle, how can the party pander to them and desert the fight? This is not leading non-party elements but using them as an excuse to sabotage all struggles. The constant references to the Bahujan Samaj members only reveal that the CCMs have given up all hope of winning these elements over, through action or agitation, and seek to use their vacillations to screen their own opportunism. A united front in which the party bases itself on the vacillations of its allies, and makes this vacillation the determining factor, and not the needs of the class struggle is not a united front but surrender to others in typical Joshian manner.

The theoretical position of the Yeravda CCMs is that we are the vanguard; and you cannot throw us into battle alone—for that is wrong according to Lenin and Stalin. It would have been good if the CCMs had taken care to study Lenin and produce quotations. This is what Lenin has to say on the relation between the vanguard and the masses:

"The main thing—not everything by a very long way, of course, but the main thing—has already been achieved in that the vanguard of the working class has been won over, in that it has ranged itself on the side of Soviet government against parliamentarism, on the side of the dictatorship of the proletariat against bourgeois democracy... The proletarian vanguard has been ideologically won over. That is the ~~main~~ thing. Without it not even the first step towards victory can be made. But it is still a fairly long way from victory. Victory cannot be won with the vanguard alone. To throw the vanguard alone into the decisive

battle, before the whole class, before the broad masses have taken up a position either of direct support of the vanguard, or at least a benevolent neutrality towards it, and one in which they cannot possibly support the enemy..." (*"Left-wing" Communism*).

This should teach the Yeravda CCMs not to indulge in loose talk about vanguard being thrown into battle. Lenin here writes in connection with "seeking the forms of transition or approach to the proletarian revolution", and warns against throwing the vanguard alone into the decisive battle for the seizure of power, without allowing the masses to catch up with the vanguard. The warning is against a premature attempt to seize power, go in for a decisive battle on the strength of the fact that the proletarian vanguard has decided in favour of the Soviets, but without waiting to give opportunity to the other sections to come to the same conclusion. This is something quite different from members of the Communist Party fighting against segregation etc. in jails. This much at least should be clear.

In reality, in the name of the false plea about the vanguard, the Yeravda comrades seek to evade all responsibility for struggles in jail. They seem to think that a vanguard is built of people who shirk fight; that personal heroism, courage, class pride apart from Marxian theory are not the requirements of the vanguard. Years of reformism have made certain sections put a premium on cowardice, and belittle the role of courageous and heroic resistance. Reformism has made many blind to the fact that a communist has to be personally a courageous person and be in the forefront of the struggles waged for the demands of the masses. If the logic of Yeravda comrades is accepted, every demonstration or meeting organised by party leaders or members will have to be given up when attacked by the police under the plea that the vanguard might be sacrificed. There is no doubt that the party tries and must try to save its cadres. But this is not done by sacrificing the class struggle, by sabotaging it, or running away from it. The way of the Yeravda comrades is this way. If these ways are adopted by the party outside, the party will be liquidated as a fighting organisation. Outside party members and cadres must lead the mass struggles openly or secretly. They get

caught, or they got shot. New ranks take their place. The struggle marches on. At the same time every care is taken to maintain the hard core of party leaders and keep continuity of leadership. The vanguard role of the party is not achieved by wholesale running away from the battle, but by leading it despite difficulties.

Actually the line of the Yeravda comrades is abjuration of the leading role of the party in the jail struggles in all respects. They abjure their leading role in relation to non-party elements, and instead of raising their consciousness and bringing it in line with the proletarian consciousness, they surrender their initiative to non-party leaders. Instead of leading them in the struggle against segregation they accept their position and disorganise the struggle. In forms of struggle also they succumb to the backwardness of non-proletarian elements because they agree with them. Thus though they call themselves the vanguard there is no distinction between them and the non-party elements. They seem to think that as vanguard their job is now to avoid all militant struggles and wait for the day of release to take leadership when they go out. Leadership does not come like this nor does a vanguard grow like this.

This is what Stalin has to say about the vanguard role of the party:

"Only a party which realises that it is the vanguard of the proletariat and *is able to elevate the masses to the level of the class interests of the proletariat* (emphasis added), only such a party can divert the working class from the path of trade unionism and convert it into an independent political force" (*Foundation of Leninism*).

Stalin quotes Lenin:

"... to forget the constant duty of the vanguard to raise ever wider strata to this most advanced level, means merely to deceive oneself, to shut one's eyes to the immensity of our tasks and to narrow down these tasks."

The Yeravda comrades are certainly not leading the non-party elements but forgetting the task to raise them to the advanced level, and are following them.

It is characteristic of their opportunism that they make so much of the non-party elements and forget that the party members and party following constitute the overwhelming majority in Bombay jails and that this logically follows the fact that the party is the real opposing force, the revolutionary force opposition to the government. At such a time to act as if the party was a small and negligible force in the united front, to import reactions, ways and methods of a period when the party was a small force in the opposition is nothing but rank opportunism and constitutes a special form of tailing behind non-proletarian classes. They forget the palpable fact that they are the majority in Bombay jails. They forget their own comrades, stalwart working class cadres who are in jail, and tune themselves to the consciousness of their non-proletarian allies. In their letters there is hardly any reference to the existence of proletarian prisoners in other jails, to our comrades, our working class cadres, to their needs, while there is reference at every step to the Bahujan Samajwadis. It almost appears as if not we are leading the Bahujan Samajwadis but they are leading us.

The revolting climax of this surrenderist policy was reached when the Yeravda leaders failed to organise a demonstration against the IGP—the butcher of Sabarmati. The way they have narrated this incident without any sense of shame, without the least self-criticism, shows the utter degradation of their consciousness and lack of political self-respect.

The IGP was coming to Yeravda after a hot reception at the hands of our comrades in Arthur Road prison. The superintendent cunningly called the non-party leader Datta Desmukh and got a promise from him that there would be no objection in our yard to the IGP's coming. Instead of repudiating this promise and immediately organising demonstration through slogans and every other means, the Yeravda CCMs seriously debated whether such repudiation would spoil our relation with Datta Desmukh and decided that they would raise shouts only when he enters their yard but not when he enters the jail and tours the other parts of the jail. They were very solicitous about their relation with Datta Desmukh but they forgot the hallowed memory of two of their

comrades who had given their lives for the party. The upshot was the IGP did not enter the yard. He had a quiet tour of the rest of the jail and went away. There was no demonstration against him, the superintendent seems to have fooled the Yeravda comrades, and the butcher of Jamnadas Mehta and Jayantilal Parekh went away without having to listen to a shout or slogan from the communist prisoners. This is their lead, their united front in action. They dared not honour the memory of their comrades. They did not start the demonstration as soon as the IGP entered the jail, out of deference to their relation with the non-party group. There could not be a more shameful spectacle than this.

This once more shows that the Yeravda CCMs invent one excuse or another to postpone all resistance, somehow seeking to escape it.

No one suggests that there should not be understanding with other political groups or parties in jail. But it should not be another prison for our activities. Its result must be in conformity with our role as leaders, and our strength as the major force. And when it becomes necessary we must be prepared to act by ourselves, even if the others do not agree. If on the issue of the demonstration against the IGP, Datta Desmukh would have broken away it would not have mattered. If people do not want to protest against the butchery of our comrades—and they get alienated because we protest—there is not much prospect of revolutionary activity in collaboration with them. It is also possible that they would have joined seeing our decisive mood and action.

In their attack on the circular letter the Yeravda comrades resort to the most spurious arguments. They attack the letter for not taking into consideration certain special features of the Yeravda situation. It is obvious that a letter written for jails can give directions by bearing in mind the common features. And it is the duty of every intelligent and honest party member to understand the directions in this light and not to use the special situation obtaining in this or that jail as a weapon of attack against directives from outside.

The special situation in Yeravda consists in the fact that the class II prisoners are mostly non-party, not under the control of the party. Besides they are people who do not yet see the danger of detention camp and therefore will not resist segregational transfer. Some may even welcome transfer to Nasik.

Obviously here resistance could not be guaranteed. But if the Yeravda comrades had been serious about resistance they would have written to the comrades outside that their directives were correct, but it was difficult to fulfil them in view of the fact that class II consists of non-party elements, but that they will agitate and propagate and do their best. If they had done this no one would have blamed them. But the Yeravda CCMs in their letter do not talk about agitation and organisation among the non-party elements but go on stating that these elements cannot be won over and therefore the directives were absurd. Thus a simple issue is made into a big issue just to score a debating point over the instructions from outside. The Yeravda CCMs resort to quibbling and subterfuge in their attempt to discredit the circular letter of Bombay CCMs.

The PB totally rejects the opportunist line of the Yeravda CCMs and jail committee. The PB has dealt exhaustively with the documents because they are the most monstrous documents and practice in conformity with these documents is inconsistent with the membership of the party. The PB calls upon all the Yeravda members concerned to repudiate their reformist line, make a self-critical estimate of their mistakes and inform the PB whether they accept the PB documents unreservedly or not. The PB appoints two CCMs to examine the conduct of jail comrades against whom complaints have been made and take appropriate action. The PB also authorises them to call for reports on the behaviour during struggles of any other comrades and recommend if any steps should be taken to reorganise the jail committees.

The PB calls upon all party members in Yeravda and other places not to be panicky nor to be misled by panic-mongers. It calls on them to hold high the proletarian banner of our party—the party whose members inside and outside jail are daily writing glorious pages in the history of the struggle for socialism.

## **Note On The Bombay Hunger Strike**

Hundreds of comrades in the Bombay jails showed commendable heroism during the last hunger strike in May 1949. The party will always remain proud of them, especially of those who, even after three weeks of hunger strike, were against the withdrawal of the strike.

Nevertheless the strike was conceived and carried on by the party leadership in Bombay jails in a cowardly and reformist manner—virtually surrendering to the enemy at the least threat of loss of life or physical incapacitation. The Bombay committee and the party leadership in Bombay showed a grossly reformist and panicky attitude in their advice to the jail comrades as well as in their efforts to rouse an agitation in support of the hunger strikes. They lost faith in Bombay's masses, lost faith in the fighting traditions of party comrades, workers and peasants, and succumbed to the cowardly counsels of the leadership in the jails. The betrayal of the Bombay hunger strike has resulted not only in a stiffening of the attitude of the local government towards political prisoners, but also of the Bombay example being used by the central government to encourage other provincial governments, like the West Bengal government, to go back on their promises to the prisoners and to adopt more and more brutal methods against prisoners.

Even in comparison with other provinces the treatment of political prisoners (detenus and convicts) in Bombay was the worst. The number of political prisoners ran to hundreds and fresh additions were being made every day. Apart from the usual privations and tortures devised by the Congress regime to wreak vengeance on the fighting workers and peasants in jail, the government also sought to provoke division among the fighters by introducing class differentiation. The majority of the worker and peasant prisoners were placed in class II (detenus) or 'C' class (convicted prisoners) while prisoners from the middle and upper sections had a chance of being put in the upper class. Further they imprisoned without trial employed working class, peasant and petty-bourgeois fighters and then, by denying any family allowance to them, sought to use the consequent ruin of their families as a pressure to break their morale.

Obviously the main demand of a jail struggle under these circumstances, would be to demand abolition of classification, uniform and better treatment for all detenus, allowance to detenus' families, release of all detenus, and better treatment to undertrial and convicted political prisoners. And anyone could see that in the given conditions of Bombay it had to be a very hard and determined struggle on the part of the prisoners to bend the government.

### **Weakness About Demands**

But the hunger strike struggle having been conceived in petty reformist way for winning some minor concessions, if possible, this crucial nature of the demands was forgotten.

First, an attempt was made by many to give up, even before the hunger strike began, the basic demands of the detenus too—namely those of abolition of classes and class I treatment to all detenus.

Comrades in jail, in their first memo to the government, had rightly demanded release or trial of detenus, abolition of class differentiation, class I for all detenus, family allowance, etc. But Nasik jail, which was one of the two principal concentrations of our prisoners and as such the leader of the prisoners' struggle, submitted a memo subsequently in which they pleaded with the government to be true to their own standard of class differentiation! They pleaded, "Many of us have been workers, earning quite high wages and living a high standard of living possible under the conditions. Some of us have been middle class people. And though the government says that our classification for treatment is governed by consideration of our education and outside mode of living, the government itself has violated its own norms in our case."

After this pleading they put forward ten demands for allowing rice, increasing quality of diet, separate kitchen, minimum clothing, some improvement in foodstuff and bath, covers for latrine pots, family allowance, etc. They did not make the demand for release or for abolition of classes and justified this by the cringing and brazen-faced statement:



"These demands (see above) are made on the presumption that the government insists on retaining class divisions in the treatment of political prisoners, while we insist that there should be no class differentiation in treatment of political prisoners."

So the demand for release, the fight for equal and better treatment to working class and peasant prisoners are unashamedly given up and a cringing appeal made to give some petty concessions within their own framework of arbitrary detention and inhuman treatment to worker and peasant prisoners.

The central leaders in Bombay had stressed to all prisoners in a letter that the impending fight was for the basic demands of all detenus in all places in the provinces. These demands are — abolition of classes, family allowance, etc. They had reminded that "the main thing was to bear in mind the central demands and that it was struggle of the working class fighters".

But the class I prisoners of Nasik jail, led by S.A. Dange, a CC member, sent a notice to the government after three days of hunger strike in other jails and on the eve of their own hunger strike in which, while they "requested" the government to abolish class differentiation, yet they hedged it around with the statement:

"Pending such a change we express our solidarity with the demands of the class II prisoners, and demand that we be permitted free association with them".

So the struggle for release, for abolition of classification, for class I treatment to class II detenus was not the struggle of the class I prisoners of Nasik—they were to fight only to express solidarity with the class II prisoners and to be allowed to mix freely with them!

This desertion of the stand of a single fight of all the detenus for common demands and equal treatment is made more clear in the letter written by Dange to the prime minister of Bombay. It is astounding that Dange was not a signatory to the joint notice of hunger strike but was allowed by the comrades to write separately to prime minister of Bombay. Be that as it may, in that letter which was foolishly circulated by the Bombay party leaders without any objection, Dange appealed to Kher:

"If you (i.e.Kher) compare what you give today to class I and II and what we got in Deoli camp, you will again find that under your regime we detenus are far worse than we or you were before.

"We are treated worse than regulation III detenus of old or class I and II detenus of 1941-45.

"In what essential matters are we worse off ? By the Deoli settlement, both class I and II got a definite schedule of normal civilian clothes twice a year, including footwear and winter suits. The claim of family allowances for the needy was recognised and some got allowances. Each class managed its own kitchen to its liking and hence better cooking was possible. The quality and quantity of diet was changed.

"Let me state that within the limitations of rationing, your government has not worsened class I diet from the old standard. But in all other matters for class I and II, your treatment has definitely fallen below.

"Even according to your philosophy what was just and supported by your guru in the Deoli strike, you refuse to support and supply to your opponents".

After writing a lot more of such stuff he concluded:

"The main point, therefore, that I wish to bring to your attention is that your system of treatment is worse than that of regulation III prisoners or the one that was agreed to and observed even in your case also after the Deoli camp strike.

"I need not catalogue all the demands of class I and II detenus in the matter of food, clothing and allowances. My purpose is to draw your attention to the fact that even former agreements are being violated, former standards of treatment are being worsened and hence in sheer self-defence we have to resort to the same old struggles of hunger strikes...."

The demand for the abolition of the vicious system of classification is not even mentioned in Dange's letter, there is no indictment of the Congress ministry which has murdered communist prisoners in jail and which was even then looking on with callous indifference to the already two days old hunger strike of the detenus of all other jails in the province. Instead, there is only a pathetic appeal for observance of at least the old Deoli standards which automatically presumes class differentiation.

The vital importance of the demands is forgotten because the hunger strike is not looked upon as a serious life-and-death struggle of the prisoners against the inhuman, anti-working class laws of the ruling class regarding political prisoners—a struggle to be waged primarily by the prisoners themselves for their essential rights irrespective of the condition of the movement outside.

This outlook towards the demands, the cowardly efforts at whittling down the most essential demands in order to be able to come to a quick compromise on the basis of trifling concessions and thereby avoid serious struggle—all these naturally caused vacillation from the very beginning of the strike and developed into a surrendering attitude quickly in course of it. As the struggle was not looked upon as a serious one no jail thought of reconstituting the jail committees or forming strike committees of tested working class fighters before the strike.

At Arthur Road prison quite a number of the men comrades deserted the struggle. Sardar Jafri, who took tea even on the fifth day of the strike, who like a government agent promised the jailor to help induce the girl comrades for accepting transfer on the 2nd—this Jafri even trotted out a theory in defence of his desertion. But the party cell there did not sharply rebuke or expose him, on the other hand, allowed him to break hunger strike on the 8th on medical grounds.

At Sabarmati the class I comrades had previously alienated 68 railway strike prisoners by refusing to go on strike with them sometime before the 2nd. As a result they were unable to draw the railwaymen into the strike from the 2nd—but they covered up their known weakness and mistake by putting the blame on the railway workers and described them as in a 'demoralised mood'. The weakness of the unit resulted in some six comrades not only refusing to join the hunger strike, but also in apologising and leaving the party.

At Thana seven comrades went on hunger strike. But they gave up after eight days only. And even during these eight days they accepted 'medicine' from the jail doctor, which was nothing but half a seer of glucose daily. This was promptly taken

advantage of by the government by broadcasting the fact and thereby discrediting the hunger strike.

The behaviour of the comrades in Nasik jail led by Dange was the most cowardly and it was almost like a treacherous stab in the back to the struggle going on in other jails.

The facts about their attitude towards the demands have already been stated. The class I prisoners submitted a notice of hunger strike separately from class II prisoners, expressing 'solidarity' with the demands of class II. This separate notice and feeling of solidarity only are clear enough expressions that class I detenus had taken class differentiation for granted.

All the jails including Nasik had been notified long ago to begin hunger strike simultaneously on the 2nd. All jails except Nasik began it on the 2nd.

### **The Nasik Betrayal**

But Nasik leaders, under the guidance of Dange, treacherously let down their comrades. They did not begin strike on the 2nd. On the 5th when the hunger strike elsewhere was three days' old they sent the before-mentioned notice to the government proposing to begin the hunger strike next week. They also took pains to inform the government that those who were ill would not join the hunger strike, implying thereby that the government need not have any immediate worry of rapid crisis or complication. They began their hunger strike one full week after the others.

To deliberately delay the hunger strike for full one week after all others had begun was sheer cowardice, fear of life, attempt to save one's skin, a gross betrayal of the general struggle.

They allowed slightly sick comrades to go out of the battle. General-body meetings of the comrades resolved to exempt Dange from the hunger strike—though he is not known to have been suffering from any serious illness. Of course Dange dissuaded them from exempting him on account of 'political reasons' but agreed to 'observe medical limitations if his health threatened to take a serious turn'. It meant that the very leader of the struggle was allowed to run away at the first apprehension of being injured in the battle.

## **Dange's Compromising Appeal**

With this outlook they naturally began to surrender from the very beginning. Within seven days fifteen broke down and some were allowed by the jail committee to break off. From the 14th the committee began writing panicky letters about all comrades 'feeling very weak'.

On the same day Dange, obviously with the approval of the committee, wrote another letter to the prime minister of Bombay in which he excused the prime minister for his failure to give attention to Dange's previous letter by saying that the prime minister might have been debarred from doing so by his 'heavy preoccupations'. He also agreed that in the then 'mood of the government it would be too much to expect them to give an unbiased consideration to the problem' (of hunger strike). And in the end he made the cowardly compromising appeal:

"I am quite prepared to let any impartial tribunal judge, after hearing class II and seeing their conditions, whether the minimum decencies and necessities they demand are reasonable or not and whether what exists today, for class II specially, conform to the notions of justice and humane standards that should be applicable even to the greatest sinners.

"PS: I mention class II specially, because the dominating consideration in the present hunger strike has been the treatment of class II detenus."

In this letter written without even consulting his comrades in other jails, Dange not only openly defies the stand for abolition of classification, not only does he take for granted class differentiation, not only does he express naive faith in bourgeois impartial tribunals, he gives away the whole struggle itself by telling the government that he is prepared to let a tribunal judge the issue. What would one call the leader of a strike who, after only seven days of a strike and behind the back of the majority of the strikers, expressed his readiness to accept a tribunal?

In their letter received in Bombay on 16th they cynically ask the centre, "This hunger strike is not 'unto death'? Or is it?"

They had pinned their faith on intermediaries like N. M. Joshi and now state in dismay, "The intermediaries like Joshi and others

cannot pull much weight with this government. Our (Bombay) strength in this respect seems to be much less than in Bengal." In the heroic struggle of the Bengal prisoners and the mass movement roused in support of it — which forced the government to concede the demands — the Nasik comrades saw only the weight pulled by 'intermediaries like Joshi'. They did not see the grim determination of the prisoners who refused to budge until demands were conceded, they did not see the indignation of the people and the martyrdom of so many men and women comrades outside which made the government shake—they saw only the weight of the intermediaries. Pinning their faith not on their own grim determination to fight, nor on their class or the people, they lose all hope and advise a cowardly surrender within 12 days of the strike. And they justify this by the statement:

"Even before we started this action, we certainly did not believe that this government would come to any settlement with us."

### **Situation In Yeravda Jail**

At Yeravda the hunger strike started with greater determination and discipline though it was wrong to have suggested exemption for all the girl comrades. The girl comrades rightly objected to this.

But here too the hunger strike was not looked upon as a grim life-and-death struggle to be waged primarily by the detenus themselves and in a manner as to rouse among masses outside the strongest indignation against the government as also the highest respect for the death-defying courage and uncompromising stubbornness of the communists. A member of the PB, a CCM and most of the well-known leaders of Bombay's fearless working class were there at Yeravda. It was expected that they would carry high the fighting traditions of their class.

But they quailed after 12 days of the struggle. Seeing that forced feeding had temporarily stopped and learning that orders have been passed not to force food till on the point of collapsing—they grew panicky at the possibility of permanent injury or death. Drawing attention to this possibility which, they said, seemed to be the diabolical plan of the government, they wrote:

"If the jail authorities continue this diabolical policy of not feeding we shall have to beat a retreat. To continue the struggle after 21st

under these circumstances will mean that we shall run the risk of disabling our comrades permanently as well as the risk of the fizzling out of the strike action...

"...our retreat, if it becomes necessary, will have to be planned quite early...

"The proposal from Yeravda is as follows: If the present situation continues and it becomes necessary to retreat we should approach people like N. M. Joshi and More of the Workers' and Peasants' Party to address an appeal to the hunger strikers on behalf of them and the detenu aid committee to give up the strike on the plea that now their case is taken up by the public outside and they would continue their agitation...

"We now think that on the 21st May itself telegrams from the detenu aid committee and if possible, from the civil liberties union,, should *reach all* jails appealing to hunger strikers to break the fast. This is imperative and absolutely essential, if we are to avoid disintegration, demoralisation and serious damage to the health of comrades."

On the 16th they repeat the information about government's vindictive attitude, report the defection of some strikers and write, "It is impossible to prolong even a day beyond 21st May" and that "the appeal to withdraw must reach by 21st noon, latest. If possible it may come earlier, but not a day beyond the 21st in any case."

It is quite clear that questions of intensifying the struggle, of fighting back with even greater self-sacrifice and determination the diabolical plans of the government were nowhere in their mind. They, the leaders of the hunger strike, had become frightened and from 14th onwards had been planning nothing but retreat.

### **The Way of Communists**

It is true that 20 days on hunger strike is a torture. But when are communists afraid of struggle because of the pain involved? It is true that the movement outside, due to the reformist outlook of the leaders outside, had suffered a very temporary setback. But should that make communist fighters lose heart? Should a fight of the prisoners be dependent mainly on the response outside? Should it not be carried on by them, till at least a climax is reached? It is true that some were deserting the struggle. But how can the hard core of

communist fighters be defeated or demoralised by the cowardice of a few traitors or vacillators?

There was certainly the danger of the stoppage of forced feeding and permanent injury or even death of a few. But a hunger strike struggle always includes these possibilities and it is by defying them that the struggle reaches a climax and also rouses the biggest movement outside. While worker comrades, women comrades and others on hunger strike in the Bengal jails resisted forced feeding with the last ounce of their energy and even suffered beatings in their exhausted condition—should our comrades at Yeravda have been frightened at the very prospect of the stoppage of forced feeding? While the sweeper comrade in Bombay was going smilingly to death in defence of his leaders, the hunger striking prisoners, what would he have thought had he known that his leaders were frightened at the possibility of a few deaths or permanent injury among themselves?

The cowardly compromising attitude of the jail leadership and the failure of the Bombay committee to renew the movement after the 8th had emboldened the government to hatch its diabolic plans to let a few collapse. The way to face it was to defy death and accept its challenge. The determined prolongation of the strike, despite one or two deaths which might occur, would have made Morarji shake, would have roused indignation outside to white heat and Morarji would have had to bend. From that day to now the government has certainly further advanced in brutality, but in the context of the situation of that time it would surely have had to sue for peace.

### **Struggle Inside Jails**

The treacheries and vacillation regarding hunger strikes or any other form of struggle from inside jails arise from a number of wrong ideas all of which basically derive from reformist outlook on life and struggle inside jails.

Some comrades think that once they reach the prisons, they are, for the time being, away from the class struggles in the country and can enjoy the period in rest and bookish education. The PB note to West Bengal jail comrades rightly warned against this reformist idea and pointed out:



"A communist whether in the factories, fields, streets, law courts or prisons, is always a stubborn fighter for the cause of the proletariat, its party and all the toiling people. He is an irreconcilable fighter against the oppressive ruling class and he is to carry forward the fight even inside the prison which is not a rest camp but another fighting front, the most difficult one."

But the reformist anti-struggle outlook persists in diverse ways.

The general idea of the vacillators is: The vanguard and most important cadres of the movement are inside jails. Such a picked body of men and women should not be exposed to the risk of death or disablement unless, simultaneously, there was huge upsurge or indignation outside to force the hands of the government. Of course some demonstrative resistance may be put up against jail conditions by means of hunger strike or other defensive forms of action—but the whole thing would be dependent on outside action and the inside action should not lead to too much sacrifice of cadres.

They forget that jail is also a sector of the battlefield. The government adopts the policy of class differentiation, inflicting physical and mental torture and hardships etc. precisely to fight its own class war, to frighten, break or wreak vengeance on the ever-growing number of class-war prisoners and thereby to weaken the movement outside as well. The class-war prisoners have to fight this policy from inside the jails tooth and nail—no matter how much may be the response outside. Workers in one factory do not base their strike or fix its duration with an eye primarily on outside support. They fight mainly on their own strength, on their own capacity to hold out. Of course individuals may falter or the supreme sacrifice may have to be made by some, but the strength of the struggle would be determined by the capacity of the majority to continue it. The blue funk at the prospect of death or permanent injury is not worthy of communist cadres. Cadres outside and common toiling men and women are laying down their lives every day. There is no reason why cadres inside jails should have to be preserved in a different manner.

As class struggle outside grows acute, the Congress government gets more and more exposed and isolated, the more the

government tries to increase its brutal offensive on the class-war prisoners. The recent ordinance about transfer outside home province, the non-fulfilment of agreements and the shooting down of prisoners inside jails make this absolutely clear. Against this a determined and running battle has to be waged, in the first instance, by the prisoners themselves. Any reformist or vacillating attitude now would be betrayal of the working class and surrender to the class enemy.

### **Post-Hunger Strike Events**

Inspired by the glorious struggles of the prisoners in Bengal, Vellore and elsewhere there has been a growing realisation of this in Bombay too in recent days. Such are the preparations for demonstration at the time of the inspector - general of prison's visit at Yeravda, the militant demonstration against Nanjappa at Arthur Road prison and the deathless courage of the Sabarmati comrades—two of whom laid down lives in their fight against transfer intended for segregation of the classes.

Still there is considerable confusion and vacillation among jail comrades on the question of struggle and forms of struggle. The two CCMs at Yeravda and all their comrades have refused to accept any criticism of their failing during the last hunger strike and have stated that they “consider it a false and irresponsible assertion that the withdrawal of hunger strike was an act of cowardice.”

Naturally with such an outlook, they still vacillate before every new struggle or new form of struggle. On the 9th August the central comrades at Bombay issued a circular to all jails giving the information that government intends to concentrate all class II detenues at Nasik and class I at Yeravda to break the unity of the prisoners, to separate worker and peasant prisoners from their leaders and also to prepare the ground for transfer to Deoli. For these reasons the circular gave the call for resisting transfer of detenues to different jails. It was against such transfer that the Sabarmati comrades fought with their blood. They did this even before receiving the circular—which shows how they learnt from the struggle of the West Bengal, Vellore, Cuddalore comrades and how they connected correct revolutionary understanding of the government's policy with revolutionary heroism.

## **Persisting Weaknesses**

But the Yeravda comrades, led by a PBM and a CCM questioned the utility of the Sabarmati struggle. They opined that it was not wise to lose precious lives in resisting transfers unless it was definitely known to the people that they were being transferred to Karwar—which was not yet the case regarding Sabarmati transfer as the transfers were being made to Yeravda. They expressed the definite opinion that transfers inside the province should not be physically resisted, but protests may be made.

It is they themselves who inform in their letter that class II detenues were to be concentrated at Nasik and class I at Yeravda, probably as a prelude to transfer to Deoli. But this differentiation of the two classes, their segregation and division do not appear to be of any serious consequences—they are against resisting it. What is it except cowardly surrender to the government's policy of division and perpetuation of class differentiation? Their talk of resisting when attempt is to be made to transfer to Deoli becomes only a cover for screening their immediate surrender.

They write a lot about the issue of the fight not being clear to the people and on that basis condemn the action of the Sabarmati comrades. But would it not have been clear to the people if they had stated that they were fighting against the segregation of the two classes? Would it not have been clear to Bombay's working class if they had told them that their brother workers, who were leaders of their struggles, were going to be held permanently in class II and their strength of united struggle was also being sought to be disrupted? Would not the Bahujan Samajwadis—whose inability to understand the need for fighting transfers except to Delhi was held up as an excuse for not initiating struggle—would they not have understood this plain issue? And why must the overwhelming majority of the prisoners surrender tamely because of the weakness of a few?

It is the reformists who put off struggle till the last possible day on the plea of all being not prepared, public support having not yet been mobilised and so on and so forth. Our Yeravda comrades behave similarly.

### **Theory Of 'Defensive Resistance'**

Even on the question of the nature of resistance, if and when it may be necessary in their opinion to resist, they advance Joshian arguments.

They say that even when physical resistance may be necessary this should be 'defensive resistance'. They explain defensive resistance in the following terms:

"We would gather at one place, raise slogans and refuse to be separated or locked up. If they attacked us, we would defend ourselves with bare fists, snatch away their lathis if we could etc. But we would not collect stones and sticks, hurl them at the police. Of course when a clash actually occurs and they behave with especial brutality it does become necessary to hit back with whatever you can lay your hands on in sheer self-defence.... But the point is whether right from the beginning we should make a different plan, a plan of collecting stones etc. not allowing the police to come near our barrack by hurling stones at them, not waiting for them to attack us but seize the initiative ourselves....

"...Inside the jail where you are inferior not merely in weapons but also in numbers and where moreover you cannot take shelter or manoeuvre, such action can have only one result— very severe loss to us and practically no loss to the enemy except a few scratches. The brutality of the firing at Sabarmati clearly shows that what the government is out to do is to physically exterminate or permanently incapacitate as many of our comrades as possible. And we feel that we should not adopt a form of struggle which facilitates the execution on this plan."

These prisoners must have heard how prisoners in West Bengal jails fought and gave away four precious lives. Has that helped the government in its plan? No. That has still further isolated and exposed the government. They have heard how the Sabarmati comrades gave two lives in resisting transfer. Has that demoralised our people or party and strengthened the government? No. On the other hand that has whipped up new spirit in the party, caused greater indignation among people. None of this would have happened if the West Bengal and Sabarmati

comrades had quailed at the threat of physical extermination or permanent injury. But the Yeravda comrades used this very threat for cowardly withdrawal of hunger strike and now use it for avoiding militant resistance.

Hence they will not collect stones and sticks or hurl them or raise barricades which 'make firing inevitable', but will resist with bare fists *when attacked*—which is called 'defensive resistance'.

What is all this prattle about defensive resistance, making the issue clear to the people, etc.—except a stale repetition of P.C. Joshi's notorious 'Pol-Org Letter' where he suggested that the police who were attacking the kisans should be allowed to do their normal duty of search, arrest, etc. and resistance was to be offered only when they raped or burnt!

They object to collecting sticks and hurling stones on the plea that the form of resistance in jail should correspond to the form, stage and tempo of movement outside. Are the use of sticks and stones against the police unknown things outside? Must the throwing of stones inside jail against police attackers always wait till the movement outside in its support has started throwing stones? Are forms of struggle confined to the experiences of one locality or one jail?

These are absurd arguments. The essence of their outlook is: Delay the struggle as long as possible and put up minimum resistance. This is always the mode of operation of hardened reformists. It arises out of cowardice and denial of class struggle. It leads to surrender.

### **Comrade Dange's Conduct**

In conducting the hunger strike and subsequently Dange's conduct has been the most reprehensible and the PB is bound to take note of it.

Apart from the weaknesses shown by Nasik comrades under Dange's leadership, which have been enumerative before, Dange has been guilty personally of grave weaknesses. He did not sign the joint notice of hunger strike sent by Nasik comrades. He violated every principle of joint struggle by sending a separate

memo to the prime minister of Bombay. In that he almost accepted class differentiation and pleaded for the restoration of old detenu standards and invoked in support the names of Gandhiji and Jayaprakash Narayan. Under his leadership the Nasik struggle started seven days after the others and constituted a stab in the back of others. It is reported that it was he who advised Nasik hunger strikers to take lemon and sugar. He had the cheek to submit a bill to the party for Rs. 175 which was spent for the cost of those lemons, etc. While the struggle was on he wrote another letter to the prime minister of Bombay in which he excused Kher for his callousness, whittled down the demand for abolition of class differentiation and, what is a graver offence, gave away the whole struggle by expressing his readiness to let a tribunal judge the issue.

He did not learn anything subsequently, or from the glorious struggle of the prisoners of West Bengal, Vellore and Cuddalore. According to Nasik jail committee:

"Kothawala (IGP) had a private talk with Dange when he had gone to Yeravda. Kothawala suggested that class I detenus be brought to Yeravda . . . and class II be kept at Nasik. If this is done it would be better and easier for the jail administration to look after the detenus...

"Dange in his letter to the government suggested that instead of Yeravda, all class I detenus be brought to Nasik climate and living conditions being better there than at Yeravda."

Dange has nothing to say against the government plans for segregating class II and class I prisoners, rather he seems to accept them. His only concern was to see that class I prisoners got the place where climate and living conditions were better .

### **Bombay Committee And Central Comrades At Bombay**

Detailed facts or review about the activities of the Bombay committee in leading the agitation in support of the hunger strike struggle are not yet in our hands. However from what reports are available it is quite clear that they grew panicky, lost faith in the masses, looked upon the prisoners' struggle in a cowardly reformist way, succumbed to the cowardly pressure of the

leadership in the jail and committed a number of mistakes which led to the failure of the struggle.

From May Day itself there was growing response in Bombay's working class to the call for support of the prisoners' struggle. This was shown by the large participation in meetings and demonstrations. But the slogan of a general strike in support of the prisoners does not seem to have been raised from the very beginning—it was kept off till a later date on the plea that otherwise Morarji Desai would come to know about it and unleash terror against the proposed strike.

Even concrete agitation about the condition of class II detenus, who came directly from Bombay's working class, was neglected. The Congress government was quick enough to take advantage of this weakness and sought to feel the people by broadcasting the facilities and 'luxuries' allowed to class I detenus. It was only after that, in the third week of the hunger strike, that agitation was initiated on the basis of concrete facts about class II. But it was rather late at that time.

The absence of concrete agitation and the delay in popularising slogan of a general strike showed that the Bombay committee did not realise how hard a struggle it was going to be, how brutal would be the preparations of the government no matter whether the strike slogan was kept secret for a few days or not—and that the only way to defeat them was to expose these very brutalities to the working class and rouse it for action against these. Instead of seeing this the Bombay committee depended, to a great extent, on spontaneous response to its call of strike etc.

Naturally, after the arrest of about 50 cadres in the demonstration of the 8th and intensification of police measures, the Bombay committee got almost completely cut off from the workers. Its strike call for the 11th was issued only through handbills, there was hardly any direct contact with and agitation among workers, let alone party comrades directly initiating strike action. Hence the strike was failure.

At this stage it was necessary to regroup, reagitate and call for action again with the intensification of crisis in the condition of the hunger strikers. A belated attempt at a signature campaign

was made. But hardly any effort seems to have been put behind it. There was no attempt to hold smaller demonstrations— which would certainly have gathered bigger proportions when some crisis would be reached in the conditions of detenus.

The reason for this was that after the 11th the Bombay committee lost all faith in Bombay's working class and grew panicky. L. K. Oak and S. Y. Kolhatkar of the Bombay committee proposed that the prisoners should be asked to give up hunger strike or the mediation of N. M. Joshi should be sought to cover their retreat. It showed that they had the same reformist understanding of the prisoners' struggle as the jail leadership themselves had. They were equally rattled by the threat of some comrades dying or receiving permanent injury. They had even lost the selfrespect of Bombay's fighting working class and advised grovelling before N. M. Joshi as a face-saving device.

The central comrades in Bombay rightly rejected this suggestion. But they themselves were a victim to the idea. The pressure for withdrawal coming from Nasik and Yeravda also unnerved them. That is why even though rejecting the Bombay committee's suggestion in their letter, they themselves wrote in it, "To ask the comrades in jail to give up their hunger strike at this juncture when it is possible for them to carry on for *another week*, when yet another big effort to rouse the workers and public can be made, would be sheer betrayal of a great struggle." That means, they too were frightened at the prospect of death, conceived of hunger strike struggle as a mild demonstration which should not cause injury, but calculated that the prisoners might continue without serious injury for another week.

That is why the very next day they feel completely in line with the vacillators from jail and the vacillators of the Bombay committee. On 16th they sent a letter to the demands saying that on 18th or 19th workers' and citizens' deputation will be sent to all jails requesting the detenus to give up fast and that the detenus should therefore carry on the hunger strike for only *two days more*. At the same time they issued a circular to all units asking them to organise batches of comrades to go to Nasik and Yeravda to meet the leaders and informing all that in the



given circumstances (of Morarji wanting some comrades to die of hunger strike ) “we may be called upon to advise our comrades to break the fast in time”.

This means the Bombay committee and the central comrades at Bombay had agreed on surrender as early as the 16th and had even made this known to jail as well as to all party comrades and sympathisers. Thereby they had themselves killed every possibility of further agitation.

And, about the same time, the central comrades agreed to hectic running after N.M.Joshi and similar mediators, to the facesaving of the strike being called off on the citizens' committee of N.M.Joshi & Co. assuring the detenus to continue the fight for their cause.

And, to cap it all the central comrades at Bombay misused the name of the PB and sent on the 19th a circular to the jail comrades in the name of the PB —congratulating them for the ‘unfaltering courage, grim steadfastness, exemplary solidarity and discipline’ with which they all carried on the struggle and which was ‘truly worthy of the great Communist Party’—and called upon all of them to terminate the hunger strike immediately.

The same reformist understanding of the situation, and of struggles inside jail as shown by the jail leadership and non-understanding of the struggle for political prisoners’ demands as a part of the acute class struggle going on in the country—panic before the class enemy, surrender to capitulators within our ranks—these were the reasons that led to these serious mistakes on the part of the central comrades at Bombay.

## **Mighty Advance of The National Liberation Movement In The Colonial And Dependent Countries**

One of the outstanding features of the present international situation is the unprecedented scope of the revolutionary struggle of the peoples of the colonial and dependent countries.

In many countries this struggle is of an armed nature, with hundreds of millions of working people of the countries of the east taking part in it. The scale and nature of this struggle, led by the working class and the communist parties, show that the peoples of the colonial and dependent countries have resolutely taken the path of revolution against colonial slavery and for national liberation.

The mighty advance of the post-war revolutionary, liberation struggle in the independent and colonial countries has shaken the entire system of world imperialism to its very foundations and shows that the colonial peoples refuse to live any longer in the old way, and the ruling classes in the metropolitan countries are unable any longer to rule them in the old way.

The great October Socialist Revolution released the revolutionary energy of the oppressed masses of the colonial countries, linked their struggle for freedom and national independence with the revolutionary struggle of the working people of all countries, thus opening the way to their liberation.

The Lenin-Stalin national policy, the victory of socialism in the USSR, which turned the formerly oppressed peoples of Russia's outlying regions into equal socialist nations, who today make up the great fraternal family of Soviet peoples, give and continue to give a powerful impulse and support to the colonial and dependent peoples in their struggle against colonial and imperialist slavery.

The victorious people's liberation war against fascism which the Soviet Union headed, the defeat of German and Japanese imperialism and also the fact that such colonial powers as Britain, France, Italy, Holland and Belgium, have become considerably weaker—all furnished favourable conditions for struggle and for the victory of the national-liberation movement in the colonial and dependent countries.

The establishment of people's democratic power in the countries of Central and Southeastern Europe, the increased political and economic might of the USSR and the people's democracies, the resolute and consistent struggle of the democratic camp, headed by the USSR, against American and British imperialism—the main oppressor of the freedom of colonial peoples—weakened, and could not but weaken, the entire system of imperialism and thus rendered and continue to render decisive assistance to the colonial peoples in their struggle for national freedom and independence.

The world historic victory of the Chinese people over the combined forces of the reactionary Kuomintang and American imperialism is a striking proof of the advance of the national-liberation struggle, of the triumph of the Lenin-Stalin teaching concerning the strategy and tactics of the communist parties heading this struggle.

The victory of the Chinese people is of enormous significance in strengthening the national-liberation struggle in the colonial and dependent countries.

Analysing the conditions of the victory of the Chinese people's liberation revolution, Liu Shao-chi, vice-president of the World Federation of Trade Unions, in his speech to the Peking Trade Union Conference of the countries of Asia and Oceania, stated: "The path taken by the Chinese people... is the path that should be taken by the people of many colonial and dependent countries in their struggle for national independence and people's democracy".

The experience of the victorious national-liberation struggle of the Chinese people teaches that the working class must unite with all classes, parties, groups and organisations willing to fight the imperialists and their hirelings and to form a broad, nationwide united front, headed by the working class and its vanguard—the communist

party, the party equipped with the theory of Marxism-Leninism; the party that has mastered the art of revolutionary strategy and tactics; that breathes the spirit of revolutionary irreconcilability to enemies of the people, the spirit of proletarian organisation and discipline in the mass movement of the peoples.

A decisive condition for the victorious outcome of the national-liberation struggle is the formation, when the necessary internal conditions allow for it, of people's liberation armies under the leadership of the communist party.

As the examples of China, Vietnam, Malaya and other countries show, armed struggle is now becoming the main form of the national-liberation movement in many colonial and dependent countries.

In Vietnam, the armed people have liberated 90 per cent of their country from the French imperialists. The 150,000 French troops in Vietnam are afraid to leave the occupied towns, are bottled up by the armed forces of the Vietnam Republic.

In South Korea, guerilla forces are making life intolerable for the police forces of the American-installed puppet, Syngman Rhee.

In Malaya, 120,000 British troops are bogged down in a fruitless endeavour to crush the Malayan people's national-liberation army. In the Philippines—the 'model' US colony—partisans are in the field against the puppet Quirino government.

In Indonesia, patriot forces are fighting against the combined Dutch and Hatta quisling troops. Half Burma is in the hands of the people's forces fighting against the British imperialist agency. The national-liberation movement in Latin America, Africa and the Near East is spreading far and wide.

The mass movement of the peoples in the colonies and semicolonies, the movement that unfolded after the war and developed into an armed struggle, force the British imperialist to make a tactical retreat. A sham independence was bestowed on India. But the interests of British imperialism remain "sacred and inviolable". The Mountbattens have departed but British imperialism remains and octopus-like grips India in its bloody tentacles.

In these conditions, the task of the Indian communists, drawing on the experience of the national-liberation movement in China and other countries, is, naturally, to strengthen the alliance of the working class with all the peasantry, to fight for the introduction of the

urgently needed agrarian reform and—on the basis of the common struggle for freedom and national independence of their country, against the Anglo-American imperialists oppressing it and against the reactionary big bourgeoisie and feudal princes collaborating with them—to unite all classes, parties, groups and organisations willing to defend the national independence and freedom of India.

The victory of the revolution in China and the advance of the national-liberation struggle in the colonies have thrown the imperialists, who are desperately trying to retain their grip on the colonies, into a fury. It would be a mistake to underestimate this feverish activity of the imperialists who are suffering defeat.

The communist parties, trade unions and all democratic organisations in the colonial and dependent countries should rally the working people and all progressive forces, daily expose the colonising plans of the foreign imperialists and the treacherous, anti-popular role of reaction which collaborates with the imperialists.

In the metropolitan countries, communists, whose duty is to rally and unite the democratic forces in support of the colonial peoples, should remember Comrade Stalin's word: "No lasting victory is possible in colonial and dependent countries unless a real link is established between the movement for their liberation and the proletarian movement of the more advanced countries of the west".

Seamen, dockers and railwaymen in Marseilles, Saint Nazaire and other ports in France have, by their courageous action in refusing to handle munitions for the colonial war in Vietnam, set a splendid example of international working-class solidarity.

The experience of the revolution in Russia, China and the people's democracies teaches that when a people resolutely goes into struggle, and when the communist parties are capable of heading this struggle, no forces of internal counter-revolution and of the foreign imperialists can crush the people's masses who have taken to revolution.

Fraternal bonds of solidarity are being forged between the working people of the west and the revolutionary peoples of the colonial and dependent countries. This solidarity of hundreds of millions of people is the rock on which imperialism will perish.

## Statement Of The Polit Bureau Of The Communist Party Of India On The Editorial Article Of The Organ Of The Information Bureau On : The National-Liberation Movement In The Colonies\*

[The polit bureau in issuing the statement given below to the ranks of the party has sent the following circular to all PCs:

You should study the *Lasting Peace* editorial of 27 January 1950 and the PB statement on the same carefully and express yourself on both the documents. The PB statement attempts to place the mistakes of the PB and at the same time carry forward the achievements made by the party. We are also sending herewith Balabushevich's article (PB document for all PMs—No 15) which will place the activities of the party correctly and will help in understanding the *Lasting Peace* editorial. The article is from *Problems of Economics*, No 8, Moscow. The PB will report on its mistakes to the CC which will take all steps necessary to implement the correctives. You should circulate both the *Lasting Peace* editorial as well as the PB statment to the ranks. You should also circulate this covering letter and wherever possible Balabushevich's article to the ranks.]

The editorial article on "Mighty Advance of the National-Liberation Movement in the Colonies and Dependent Countries" published in the organ of the information bureau of the communist and workers' parties, *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy*, No. 4 (64) dated 27 January 1950 is a brilliant

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\* This statement was issued on February 22, 1950 as Polit Bureau Document No. 14 for all Party members.

contribution to the Indian people's struggle for national independence and people's democracy.

It is a correct lead to the Communist Party of India and a timely reminder that in its actual achievements it is *lagging behind* the immense possibilities of the rising tempo and sweep of the revolutionary struggles which the Indian people are waging against Anglo-American imperialists and their Indian collaborators for national liberation and against colonial slavery.

"One of the outstanding features of the present international situation", states the editorial article, "is the unprecedented scope of the revolutionary struggle of the peoples of colonial and dependent countries, which in many countries is of armed nature with hundreds of millions of working people of the countries of the east taking part in it".

This mighty advance of the post-war revolutionary liberation struggle of the colonies and semi-colonies, which has shaken the entire system of world imperialism to its very foundations, has been opened up, as the editorial article points out, by the following major factors.

(1) The great October Socialist Revolution, the victory of socialism in the USSR and the Lenin-Stalin national policy which turned the former oppressed peoples into equal socialist nations.

(2) Victorious people's liberation war led by the USSR against fascism, the defeat of German and Japanese imperialism, and the weakening of such colonial powers as Britain, France, Italy, Holland and Belgium.

(3) The establishment of the people's democratic power in the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe.

(4) The resolute struggle of the democratic camp headed by the USSR against British and American imperialism — the main oppressors of the freedom of the colonial peoples.

(5) The world-historic victory of the Chinese people over the combined forces of the reactionary Kuomintang and American imperialism.

All these factors have weakened the entire system of imperialism and have created favourable conditions for the struggle and for the victory of the national-liberation movements in the colonial and dependent countries.

The editorial article is thus a sharp reminder to the Communist Party of India and in Pakistan of the great lag that exists between the mighty advancing forces in the entire colonial world led by their communist parties and the Indian people's liberation movement led by the Communist Party of India.

A tremendous responsibility rests upon the Communist Party of India to make up this lag. This is all the more urgent at the present moment when the British and American imperialists, with the active support of the Indian big bourgeoisie and other reactionaries, are desperately seeking to tighten their grip on our country, crushing the national independence and freedom of the peoples both in India and Pakistan, monopolising their vast material resources, to convert the entire country into a military base, to crush the national-liberation struggles in the countries of Southeast Asia, in Malaya, Burma, Vietnam and Indonesia and to unleash a war against the Soviet Union, People's Democratic China and people's democracies of Central and South-Eastern Europe.

"The victory of the revolution in China and the advance of the national-liberation struggles in the colonies", warns the editorial article, "have thrown the imperialists, who are desperately trying to retain their grip on the colonies into a fury. It would be a mistake to underestimate this feverish activity of the imperialists, who are suffering defeat."

The resolute struggles which the working class, peasantry and other progressive forces such as the students, democratic youth and women are waging under the leadership of the Communist Party in the Indian Union and in Pakistan against the reactionary bloc of the imperialists, the big bourgeoisie, the feudal princes and the landlords, the fact that these struggles are rising to the pitch of armed clashes between the police and the people in many cities and districts; the peasant partisan warfare developing in Telangana and in certain other parts of the country—all these indicate that the Indian proletariat and Communist Party are rising to the level of the leader of the national-liberation struggle of the Indian people, and that



conditions for the victory of this struggle for the rout of the Anglo-American imperialists and their Indian collaborators are maturing fast.

These developments point out that the lags that exist are not inevitable, that they can and must be removed. They can and must be removed by correctly applying the Lenin-Stalin teaching concerning the strategy and tactics of the Communist Parties heading the national-liberation struggles, which have registered a single triumph in the world-historic victory of the Chinese people's liberation revolution.

In this respect, the editorial article has drawn the pointed attention of the Communist Party of India to the rich experience of the people's democratic revolution in China which was led by the Communist Party of China and its leader, Mao Tse-tung, to its final and irrevocable victory. The editorial article has emphasised that "the path taken by the Chinese people... is the path that should be taken by the people of many colonial and dependent countries in their struggle for national independence and people's democracy".

The editorial has sharply underlined two main lessons which the experiences of the victorious national-liberation struggle of the Chinese people teach us:

(1) "The working class must unite with all classes, parties, groups and organisations willing to fight the imperialists and their hirelings and to form a broad, nationwide front headed by the working class and its vanguard, the communist party, equipped with the theory of Marxism-Leninism; the party that has mastered the art of revolutionary strategy and tactics; that breathes the spirit of revolutionary irreconcilability to enemies of the people, the spirit of proletarian organisation and discipline in the mass movement of the peoples."

(2) "A decisive condition for the victorious outcome of the national-liberation struggle is the formation, when the necessary internal conditions allow for it, of people's liberation armies under the leadership of the communist party".

The polit bureau shall re-examine all its resolutions, including the report on the strategy and tactics, in the light of these lessons and make comprehensive reviews and submit them to the central committee for confirmation and issue them to the ranks in the immediate future.

The second Congress of the Communist Party of India was a great step in the life of the Indian Communist Party. The political thesis adopted by the Congress laid down the basic programme and strategy and tactics of the people's democratic revolution in India. The political thesis advanced as the most important task in the new stage, the struggle for the consolidation by all means of the people's democratic front, which must be the embodiment of the alliance of the working class, the peasantry and the urban petty-bourgeoisie under the leadership of the working class.

The Congress became the starting point and a tremendous step forward in unleashing the forces of people's liberation struggles in Indian Union and Pakistan and for the strengthening of proletarian hegemony in the same.

The general secretary's report on the strategy and tactics adopted by the polit bureau correctly applied on many points the line of the political thesis, and combated reformist influence inside the party, which was a hindrance in giving a bold leadership to the struggles of the workers and the toiling masses. This is testified by the fact that in the course of the last one year, the working class and the Communist Party have registered considerable successes in developing and heading struggles of workers, peasants and the oppressed petty-bourgeoisie in many parts of the country in which tens of thousands have been mobilised.

But the Communist Party cannot rest satisfied with rousing and leading tens of thousands, at a time when under the stress of the deepening economic crisis, and when the anger and the disillusionment of the people against the bourgeois servitors of imperialism are rising ever higher, the objective possibility exists of mobilising tens of millions of people belonging to all classes, parties and groups and organisations willing to fight imperialists and their hirelings, and uniting them in the revolutionary struggle for people's power.

This lag is explained by the fact that while fighting reformism, which acted as a brake on the unleashing and the bold leadership of the struggles of the workers and the toiling masses, the polit bureau committed certain errors in dogmatist and sectarian directions, which restricted the scope of those struggles and prevented the mobilisation of the broadest masses in the same.

In combating the reformists who were retreating before repression and resiling from revolutionary struggle, the various resolutions of the polit bureau, particularly the report on strategy and tactics, correctly emphasised that the countrywide offensive launched by the Congress government against the Communist Party and the democratic forces is a measure not of the strength of the reactionary camp but of its crisis, of its growing weakness and a sign of its impending collapse. We correctly pointed out the growing crisis of the capitalist order and underlined the revolutionary tempo and sweep which the struggles of the masses were assuming under the leadership of the proletariat and called for the unwavering and resolute leadership of these struggles by the communists. But in doing so we failed to bring out sharply the fact that the grant of fictitious independence in the form of dominion status has not changed the colonial character of the Indian economy in which the key positions still remain in the hands of foreign imperialists. As a result of this faulty understanding, the main stress was not laid on the fact that the character of the struggle still remained in the main anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and national-liberationist. The task of dislodging of the national bourgeoisie from the leadership of the movement and its isolation, which constitutes one of the most important conditions for the hegemony of the working class in the national-liberation struggle, cannot be effectively carried out unless this basic fact is kept firmly in view.

In combating the reformists, who maintained that nothing has changed as a result of the Mountbatten award, the resolution of the polit bureau correctly pointed out that the Nehru-Patel government representing the interests of the capitalists and landlords has gone over to imperialism but we failed to underline the fact that in this sham independence which we correctly

unmasked the interests of British imperialism remained "sacred and inviolable" and that "the Mountbattens had departed but British imperialism remains and octopus-like grips India in its bloody tentacles". This led to two serious errors:

Firstly, we described the national bourgeoisie as the leading force (most active fighting partner) in the imperialist-bourgeois-feudal combine; whereas imperialists constitute the leading force in the bloc composed of the imperialists and their Indian satellites. The Nehru-Patel government is carrying out dictates of Anglo-American imperialists.

Secondly, the general secretary's report on strategy and tactics adopted by the polit bureau failed to distinguish between the Indian big bourgeoisie and other sections of the bourgeoisie, to point out that it is the big bourgeoisie that is placed in the seat of power and collaborating with imperialists as their satellites.

In combating the reformist position, which advocated abjuration of struggle against the bourgeoisie of the less developed nationalities, the resolutions of the polit bureau correctly maintained that one of the essential conditions of victory of the Indian revolution is ruthless struggle against all shades of bourgeois nationalism, establishment of the unity of the workers and the toiling masses belonging to all nationalities in a common people's revolutionary front in the struggle against imperialism and its collaborators. But they failed to point out that various sections of the bourgeoisie i.e. mainly belonging to undeveloped nationalities, can still at one time or another play the role of "fellow-travellers" in the national-liberation struggle, that the working class can enter into temporary agreements on national-democratic issues with those sections of the bourgeoisie for common struggle against imperialism, feudalism and national big bourgeoisie representing predominantly the Gujarati and Marwari capitalists. At the same time we must bear in mind that under the present conditions of the extreme accentuation of the general crisis of capitalism, when a specially sharp polarisation of class forces is taking place, both on an international scale and within the bounds of every capitalist country individually, these oppositional strata of the Indian bourgeoisie ought not to

be regarded in any way as reliable or stable members of the anti-imperialist camp.

In combating the reformist elements, who had been undermining the struggles of the agricultural workers and poor peasants in the interest of the rich peasants and refusing to tear off the former from the political influence of the latter, the polit bureau resolution on the agrarian question and similar other documents correctly laid stress on the supreme importance of firmly relying on agricultural workers and the mass of the peasantry. It is as a result of this strategy that mighty agrarian struggles have developed under the leadership of the Communist Party in a number of provinces and districts. The afore-mentioned resolution of the polit bureau, instead of emphasising the anti-feudal character of the workers and peasants alliance, wrongly lumps the rich peasants with the landlords describing the former as the spearhead of bourgeois-feudal reaction in the rural area. The resolution failed to point out that main slogans of the present stage of Indian revolution—abolition of landlordism without compensation and land to the tillers— correspond to the interests of the entire peasantry.

The afore-mentioned article of the organ of the information bureau has corrected this serious mistake by pointing out that "In these conditions, the task of the Indian communist, drawing on the experience of the national-liberation movement in China and other countries, is naturally to strengthen the alliance of the working class with *all* the peasantry, to fight for the introduction of the urgently needed agrarian reforms ..." (emphasis added ). No doubt political influence of the rich peasants in the village must be fought, peasant masses weaned away from them and proletarian leadership and discipline established in the mass peasant movement. But in the interest of rallying the entire peasantry, for the struggle for the abolition of landlordism without compensation and for securing land to the tillers, which constituted the urgently-needed agrarian reform, and in the interest of strengthening the alliance of the working class and all the peasantry, such reforms as nationalisation of all land must not be advocated as an immediate demand and the slogan of

expropriation of rich peasant must not be advanced, the trade-union movement must actively lend its support to the peasant movement. The Communist Party must organise the peasant masses into action for general as well as the partial democratic demands of the peasantry.

In applying the correct slogan of alliance of the working class and all the peasantry, reformists will distort its true meaning by preaching abjuration of partial struggles of the agricultural workers and share-croppers on the ground that they endanger the interest of the rich peasant; such distortion must be combated in order to establish leadership of the working class over the peasant movement and to lend it a revolutionary character. Reformists will further distort the slogan to hinder the mass struggle of the peasantry on the ground that they will alienate the rich peasant. It is by fighting such deviations that peasant struggles have advanced and will advance.

The ideological root of the sectarian deviation of the polit bureau on the agrarian question arises out of this. While development of capitalist relations in agriculture in India and the consequent class differentiation of the peasantry have been rightly pointed out, we have failed to see feudal landlordism as the dominant form of exploitation in the agrarian economy. It further arises out of the failure to understand the anti-imperialist and national-liberationist character of the Indian peasant movement.

The understanding of the development of the capitalist relations in agriculture, growing within the framework of feudal property relations, and of the consequent growth of class differentiation in the ranks of the Indian peasantry enabled the party to recognise the very important role which the agriculture workers must play in developing the agrarian revolution and in drawing the broad masses of the peasantry in the revolutionary struggle for the abolition of landlordism. It enabled us to come out of the grooves of reformism and to swing the peasant movement towards militant struggles of the peasant masses for land and agricultural workers' strike struggles for higher wages, etc. But the failure to understand feudal landlordism as the dominant form of exploitation and the colonial character of Indian

economy or, in other words, the failure to understand that the fight against imperialism and feudal landlordism constitute the basis of the community of interest of the entire peasantry have led to restricting the scope and sweep of peasant struggle on a countrywide scale.

The editorial article of the organ of the information bureau has correctly formulated our important task in the following words: "On the basis of the common struggle for freedom and national independence of the country, against the Anglo-American imperialists oppressing it and against the reactionary big bourgeois and feudal princes collaborating with them, to unite all classes, parties, groups and organisations willing to defend the national independence and freedom of India". The programme of people's democratic front set forth in the political thesis of the second party congress constitutes the basis of this broad joint front. Such a joint front must be obviously under the leadership of the working class and an ally of the international democratic anti-imperialist front led by the USSR.

In order to draw the broadest sections of the masses in the revolutionary struggles and to build the people's democratic front capable of ending the rule of the imperialists and its Indian collaborators, we must emphasise the importance of the following cardinal tasks:

- (1) The peace movement which has already begun with a broad-based character must be developed throughout the country along the line laid down in the resolution of the information bureau on the "Defence of Peace and the Struggle Against Warmongers". It must become the pivot of the entire activity of the party and the mass organisations. It is our duty to merge the struggle for national liberation with that for peace, tirelessly exposing the anti-national and treacherous policy of the Congress and League governments which have become direct lieutenants of British and American imperialists and are seeking to make India a base of war against the USSR, the people's democracies and the liberation struggle of the peoples of Asia.

- (2) Ceaseless efforts must be made to unite the ranks of the working class by systematic exposure of the splitters like the leadership of INTUC and the Socialist Party, by persistently

explaining to the rank-and-file workers under reformist influence the significance of the cause of working class unity, by bringing the unorganised workers into the fold of the unions affiliated to AITUC, organising joint strike committees with all unions in defence of working class rights and interests, and by setting up broad-based rank-and-file mill committees, factory committees, etc. The communist party and the militant unions led by it must be in the forefront of all in mobilising the broadest masses of workers to fight for their immediate and most easily understood demands and thus help to establish permanent unity in the ranks of the proletariat. Unity of the working class is essential not only for the successful defence of its day-to-day interests but also for consolidating its leading and organising role in the people's liberation struggle.

(3) Systematic efforts must be made to develop the struggle of the agricultural workers for wages and land and to organise independent agricultural workers' unions. At the same time, it is of the utmost importance to remove the lag in giving a broadbased and all-India character to the struggles of the peasants against the oppression of the feudal landlords and the police and for the seizure of land, which are developing under the revolutionary leadership of agricultural workers and proletarianised peasants and which are rising to the level of partisan warfare as in Telangana and other places. Drawing the broadest masses of the peasantry in the revolutionary struggle for land, for the abolition of landlordism will be possible only by resolutely fighting against the Congress and socialist leaders, the purveyors of the stupefying influence of Gandhism, who are seeking to draw away the peasant masses from revolutionary struggle and to disrupt the growing worker-peasant alliance in the countryside. The building of mass agricultural workers' unions, and of mass kisan sabhas, their coordination and guidance on all-India plane, the isolation and exposure of the parallel kisan organisations that are sought to be formed by the Congress and socialist leaders are the most important tasks closely bound up with the developing revolutionary struggle of the peasantry under the proletariat and the Communist Party.



(4) It is of the utmost importance to develop a broad-based struggle against the fascist repressive policy of the Congress rulers, the trampling of all democratic rights and liberties by them which is arousing anger and disillusionment among the wide sections of the people. For this purpose we must broaden the movement for the defence of civil liberties by bringing within its fold all parties, groups, organisations and individuals who are prepared to defend the civic rights and political liberties of the people.

The resolutions of the polit bureau, correctly repudiating both reformist restriction of mass struggles into the confines of peaceful constitutionalism as well as petty-bourgeois revolutionism advocating so called 'militant' actions without the participation of the masses, have rightly stressed upon the supreme importance of combining all reforms of struggle taking into account the unequal development of the movement of the masses in different parts of the country. These directives summed up the essence of our experience of the countrywide struggles led by the Communist Party in different forms on different issues. Emphasising the essence of the experience of the Chinese revolution and the national-liberation struggle of other colonial countries, the editorial article has correctly pointed out that "A decisive condition for the victorious outcome of the national-liberation struggle is the formation, when the necessary internal conditions allow for it, of people's liberation armies".

The immense significance of the editorial article of the organ of the information bureau must be properly understood. The Anglo-American imperialists are preparing for war with feverish haste, to drown in blood the national-liberation movement of the Asian peoples. The Communist Party of India must play its historic role by mobilising millions of people against imperialism, for national independence and people's democracy.

The hatred and indignation of the people are rising high against the Congress government selling national independence to the imperialists and brutally suppressing the people at the orders of their imperialist masters. Armed clashes are taking place between its police and the people in many parts of the country. Partisan

fighters are already active in the field in certain regions. The base of the imperialists is tottering.

By correct application of the tactical line contained in the editorial article, the Communist Party shall be able to be at the head of a nationwide struggle for real national independence and people's democracy.

By daily exposing the colonising plans of the imperialists at every step, by weaning away the masses from the influence of the Congress and the socialist leaders acting as the stooges of Anglo-American imperialists, by combining all forms of struggle and by mobilising all democratic forces, we will be able to remove the gap that exists between the national-liberation struggle of the Indian people and that of the other Southeast Asian countries. The patriotic call for national independence, peace and democracy, has such a wide appeal that it is possible for the Communist Party to mobilise the millions of working people and other democratic forces in India against the anti-national reactionary bloc led by Anglo-American imperialists.

The Congress government is delivering cruel blows on the people's movement, on the working class and on the Communist Party to save the crumbling colonial order of the imperialist colonisers. But as the editorial article points out, "when a people resolutely goes into struggle and when the communist parties are capable of heading this struggle, no forces of internal counter-revolution and of the foreign imperialists can crush the people's masses who have taken to revolution".

The editorial article of the information bureau organ is a great contribution to the unification of the party ranks. Since the second party congress the stubborn fight against reformism carried on by the entire party has played a great role in unifying the ranks and putting the party at the head of the fighting people. The editorial article of the information bureau strengthens that fight and at the same time corrects our sectarian deviation from the path of Marxism-Leninism. Armed with this weapon based upon the correct application of Lenin and Stalin teachings to fight against all alien trends, we must unify the entire party as a granite rock against imperialism and its Indian allies.

## **Letter Of The New Central Committee Of The C.P.I. To All Party Members And Sympathisers\***

The editorial of the organ of the Cominform bureau dated 27 January 1950 on the "Mighty Advance of the National-Liberation Movement in the Colonial and Dependent Countries" and the manifesto of the Trade Union Conference of Asian and Australasian countries held at Peking, are historic documents which acted as a turning point in the life of our party. They came at a time when our party, except in Telangana, Andhra and the hill border regions of Mymensingh district, was sunk in the mire of left-sectarianism, having run its full course in its reckless adventurist actions. They fell on fruitful soil because on the one hand, the party ranks had seen the devastating effects of the left-sectarian adventurism of the polit bureau with their own eyes, though they did not know the way out of it and, on the other hand, the inner-party struggle was being conducted by the secretariat of the Andhra provincial committee (which includes a number of members of the central committee and two members of the polit bureau), however haltingly, since the second party congress against the left-sectarianism of the polit bureau. The entire party wakes up to the ringing calls of the Cominform bureau and the Peking conference to correct the political line and march forward. They unleash the political initiative of the party ranks so long bottled up both by right-reformism and left-sectarianism. Widespread and intense political discussions start for the first time in the history of the party. The weapon of criticism and self-criticism is being wielded by the entire party for the first time in a big way.

*\*B.T.Ranadive, General Secretary of C.P. I was replaced by Rajeswar Rao when the New Central Committee was reconstituted in 1950.*

*This Party Letter was issued on June 1, 1950, by the reconstituted Central Committee of the C.P.I. after the Central Committee meeting of May 20- June 1, 1950.*

In such a situation, the central committee elected at the second party congress met for the first time during the past two years and took important political and organisational decisions for enabling the party to get out of the present left-sectarian mire on to the path of armed struggle for national liberation and agrarian revolution, basing itself on the editorial of the Cominform bureau, manifesto of the Peking conference, and the articles of well-known Soviet leaders and academicians, such as Zhukov, Dyakov, Balabushevich, Maslennikov, and others, on the revolutionary movements in the colonies and semicolonies. No doubt the entire party ranks were kept in an atmosphere of tension and anxiety as to the future of our party because of the delay in putting before you the new political line. This could not be avoided by the central committee because of the unavoidable circumstances such as technical difficulties for arranging a meeting of the central committee members dispersed in the provinces under conditions of extreme illegality and the political confusion caused by the anti-Marxian ideas and methods injected surreptitiously by both right-reformism and left-sectarianism.

Comrades, the purpose of this letter is not to give you a full and detailed account of the central committee meeting, but to give you in short the main political and organisational decisions before the documents adopted by the central committee are finalised and sent to you. The documents will be sent to you one by one as they get ready. The central committee hopes this letter would allay your anxiety as to the future of our party.

### **Trotskyite Political Line and Titoite-Turkish Methods of the Polit Bureau**

The second party congress gave a rude shakeup to right reformism which had corroded every aspect of our party life and had eaten away the very vitals of it during the long period of its grip over the party. The second party congress was "an important step in the life of the Communist Party of India and a big political event inside the country", as Balabushevich has stated in his article. The political thesis adopted at the second congress is a document which makes a genuine attempt to rescue the party from the mire

of reformism in which it had been sunk for a long time. It restored the Leninist conception of the hegemony of the proletariat in the democratic revolution in a general way, and advanced the slogan and programme of the democratic front under proletarian leadership. But it also contains some dangerous roots of left-sectarianism which the polit bureau subsequently developed into a full-fledged trotskyite thesis, throwing overboard all the Lenin-Stalin teachings on imperialism and colonial revolutions and nullifying all the positive achievements of the second congress.

With the political impetus of the second congress, the party ranks dug up the classics, buried by right-reformism, and began to study them seriously. With the bright illumination of the classics of the great teachers and leaders—Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin—they began to grapple with the problems thrown up by the movement and understand and apply the decisions of the second party congress and the political thesis adopted by it. By the time the delegates reached their provinces, repression had already been let loose against the party in varying degrees. In Andhra, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the party already had to face white terror. In Bengal, the party had been banned immediately after the congress. The entire party cadre, dazed in the face of the fascist offensive, searched in vain in the political thesis to find out the ways and means to fight it back. Added to this, there was already confusion in the political thesis as regards the present stage and strategy of the Indian revolution, i.e. confusion between the democratic and socialist stages of the revolution and the roles of the different sections of the bourgeoisie and the rich peasants, etc.. Comrades in different provinces began to grapple with the above important political and organisational problems.

In these attempts, the notable one is that of the Andhra secretariat which produced a draft note for discussion among party ranks and submitted it to the polit bureau for its approval. In spite of certain defects, it correctly defined the stage and strategy. It sharply brought out the nature of the civil war in which we are, and also pointed out how the question of armed resistance has now been placed on the agenda. It clearly placed

the perspective of Chinese path before the entire party, i.e. the growth of revolution through bitter and prolonged armed resistance against the white terror in rural areas, combined with strikes and resistance of the working class in towns, leading to liberated areas in countryside and final capture of power.

The Bengal provincial committee secretariat too, though it had not gone to the fundamentals with regard to stage and strategy as the Andhra secretariat, had begun to grope towards the Chinese path under a different name of Southeast Asia path and suggested flexible tactics on the trade union front under the slogan of "hit and run" in its resolutions on democratic front and on trade-union struggles.

Assam comrades, faced with the realities in their own province, had also suggested in a general way the Chinese path and armed struggle in the rural areas.

The secretariat of the United Provinces provincial committee also had passed a resolution to conduct the agrarian struggle in Azamgarh district on the path of Telangana, giving detailed tactics of armed resistance.

The polit bureau, instead of carefully examining the political thesis in the light of the important articles appearing in the organ of the Cominform bureau and of other brother parties on the issues at controversy, (viz the resolution of the Cominform bureau on Yugoslav renegades, several articles on people's democracy, Alexeyev's article on India and Pakistan, Liu Shao-chi's article on proletarian internationalism and bourgeois nationalism, etc.) on the one hand, and life experience knocking on the head on the other, pursued a reckless path of dogmatism and adventurism. It produced a fullfledged trotskyite thesis of one stage revolution in the form of the three documents — "People's Democracy", "Agrarian Question" and "Tactical Line"—at its meeting held at the end of 1948, nullified all the correct things and developed fully all the wrong things in the political thesis, threw overboard all the teachings of Lenin and Stalin of imperialism and colonial revolutions, distorted Zhdanov's report, turned a blind eye to the valuable articles of the brother parties, and finally threw to the winds the principles of fraternal relations of the world communist

brotherhood to the extent of open slander of Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communist Party. It should also be noted here that a good number of the members of the central committee outside jail were by that time itself well on the path of left-sectarianism and helped the polit bureau in its reckless venture. It is proved by the fact that their criticisms of the draft note of the Andhra secretariat on the question of stage and strategy were almost on the same lines as the above mentioned polit bureau documents even before those documents had seen the light of day, though most of them had not commented on the other important problem of forms of struggle, i.e. Chinese path. This meeting of the polit bureau and the three documents it produced got the general approval of many members of the central committee and the provincial committees and acted as a green signal for the polit bureau to embark upon reckless adventurist tactics on all fronts.

The polit bureau embarked upon its adventurist line of action with a reckless call for an all-India railway strike on 9 March 1949, imagining an insurrectionary situation round the corner. It did not bother to take stock of the white terror with a cool head, or of the illusions of the railway workers in the socialist leaders, the lackeys of the Indian big bourgeoisie, of their organisational loyalties to the All India Railwaymen's Federation, and of the decrepit state of the party organisation, etc. This adventurist call ended in a fiasco exposing thoroughly the bankruptcy of the polit bureau and all its pretensions to Marxism-Leninism. The polit bureau, instead of taking lessons from this fiasco, and coming forth frankly with self-criticism, admitting its bankruptcy, chose the titoist organisational method of suppressing all criticism. The general secretary came out with an arrogant, abusive letter to the ranks and put the entire responsibility for this fiasco on the party ranks, by labelling them 'cowards', 'betrayers', 'funks' and 'saboteurs' on the one hand, and brandishing the 'rod of discipline' on the other, in order to suppress all criticism of the polit bureau's adventurist lead, thereby setting at nought every semblance of inner-party democracy. Of course this letter was accepted by some members of the polit bureau who were on the spot.

Thereafter the polit bureau, under the leadership of the general secretary, embarked upon the titoist path full steam ahead—of suppressing all opposition, badgering members of the central committee into submission and disrupting, suppressing and dissolving provincial committees outright. It was successful in cowing down all members of the central committee and provincial committees who raised their voice against it with regard to the 9th March fiasco, except the Andhra provincial committee, which included three members of the central committee and a member of the polit bureau. If the polit bureau meeting held at the end of 1948 had acted as a green signal for the left-sectarian polit bureau to embark upon adventurist tactics on all fronts, the 9th March fiasco was the starting point to run riot into titoist methods of organisation. If the members of the central committee and the provincial committees had stood up against this putschism of the polit bureau and discharged their elementary duty as responsible party leaders, 9th March would not have been a starting point for titoist-turkish methods in organisation but would have turned into the grave of left-sectarianism and the three "world-famous" documents of the polit bureau, and the party would have been saved from its present plight.

The polit bureau successfully subdued the members of the central committee and provincial committees who raised their voice on the 9th March fiasco, embarked upon further adventurist calls and wholesale "reorganisation" of the provincial committees under the plea of eliminating the "reformist scum" who were supposed to have sabotaged "bold" strike-calls of the polit bureau, and of "proletarianising" the party. Of course this does not mean that there are no confirmed reformists in leading positions who have been sabotaging every strike or struggle and who need be chucked out, or that promoting suitable cadre directly coming from the proletariat and agricultural labour ought not to be undertaken. But it was certainly wrong and disruptive to remove wholesale those who had dared to raise their voice against the adventurist tactics of the polit bureau—both confirmed reformists as well as honest and capable comrades—from leading positions, and to promote cadres solely because of their proletarian origin



to leading positions without training them and educating them, under the cover of apparently revolutionary slogans.

The fact to be noted is, the long history of our party proves that neither had right-reformism under the leadership of P. C. Joshi fought left -sectarianism, nor had left-sectarianism under the leadership of B. T. Ranadive really fought right-reformism ; but both had fooled the ranks and the people with seemingly revolutionary slogans, one with the slogan of national unity for national independence and the other with the phrases "hegemony of the proletariat" and "socialism"; one, with the slogan of functioning the party machine efficiently, had refused to promote proletarian cadres, and the other under the plea of proletarianising the party, had removed honest and capable comrades from leading positions; thus both of them, in reality, had only fought the party. It is un-Marxian to say that one anti-Marxian deviation can be fought in reality with another anti-Marxian deviation. Both carry on a mock fight against each other as long as there is no correct line, but as soon as a correct line is put forward, both resort to attacking it from two opposite ends. This is the lesson the history of our party teaches us.

The titoite-turkish methods followed by the polit bureau after the 9th March fiasco had gone unchallenged—except for the lonely voice of the Andhra secretariat. They had run their full course and reached almost a climax by the time of the direct and open political intervention of the Cominform bureau.

The titoite-turkish methods of the polit bureau expressed themselves in the following forms :

(1) The polit bureau which is a body responsible to the central committee usurped the functions of the central committee itself. The central committee meeting was never convened. The members of the central committee were badgered into submission one by one—of course, some of the members of the central committee acted as "shocktroopers" in the "holy" task of the polit bureau.

(2) Even the polit bureau was not functioned properly. It was made into a two-man show in the beginning. Later it was reduced to a one-man show—the general secretary virtually arrogating to himself the entire functioning of the polit bureau.

(3) The polit bureau—mainly the general secretary—while refusing to make any self-criticism themselves, extracted confessions in the name of self-criticism from many comrades and provincial committees. This does not mean that all the charges levelled by the polit bureau against individuals and committees were wrong.

(4) The polit bureau, while refusing to learn from the ranks and masses, suppressed all inner party democracy and discussions.

(5) The polit bureau adopted methods of favouritism and double-standards in dealing with the mistakes of comrades.

(6) The provincial committees which expressed opposition to the line pursued by the polit bureau were suppressed and dissolved. They were "recognised" with those whom the polit bureau considered fit to push through its anti-party line and methods.

The fractions—especially the students' fraction—were pitted against the provincial committees, and were utilised as a sort of check upon the provincial committees. The fractions were sought to be raised to the status of fully centralised bodies independent of provincial committees and the provincial committees were sought to be reduced to the status of post-offices.

(7) The polit bureau refused to learn from the rich experiences of the brother parties, especially Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communist Party, under the plea of not accepting anybody except Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin. Not only that, while owing formal allegiance to the above stated teachers and guides, it vulgarised and distorted their teachings to suit its own anti-party purposes.

The polit bureau resorted to open slander against the brother parties and their leaders and encouraged gossip mongering against them.

Such have been the titoite-turkish organisational methods of the polit bureau—especially of the general secretary—inside the party for the last two years. Consequently, "the whole inner-party life" got poisoned. There was no frank expression of one's own views. The ranks, even the members of the central committee, were unable to participate in the inner-party life for fear of being dubbed "cowards", "betrayers", "saboteurs", "petty-bourgeois funk", and what not. So to say a stinking barrack-like atmosphere

of suspicion, intrigue and tension, of "sealed lips" prevailed inside the party till the editorial of the organ of the Cominform bureau appeared. This was ideal ground and fertile soil for the growth of disruptors, careerists and spies. The situation was much worse than it had been before the second party congress during the days of reformism.

The polit bureau's trotskyite-titoite left-sectarian policy and organisational methods brought the party to the verge of disruption. In spite of this, the agrarian struggle continued and expanded in Telangana, Andhra, and the hill border regions of Mymensingh, because the comrades there learning from life experience and forced by it, bypassed the polit bureau's sectarian documents and marched forward. The left-sectarian polit bureau cannot lay claim to them just as right-reformism cannot do it for Telangana which had been started in the days of reformism. Both have done enough to restrict and sabotage them. It is to the credit of the comrades there that they could save these glorious struggles from both the demons and extend them in spite of innumerable obstacles set in the way by both "friends" and foes.

It is true that the titoist methods of the polit bureau had not yet reached the extreme form as in the Yugoslav party, but it was well on its way along that path. The political intervention of the Cominform bureau and the Peking conference at the eleventh hour saved the party and the mass movement from total disruption. The documents of the Soviet academicians on the colonial revolutions and the documents and speeches of the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party helped us to take a turn and chalk out broad lines of new strategy and tactics.

The seriousness of the situation facing the party could be judged by the fact that the general secretary in a letter to a member of the polit bureau "discovered" in the Peking manifesto "an atrocious formulation" in its calling upon "the working class to rally the national bourgeoisie" (i.e. middle bourgeoisie—CC) and saw a correction of it in the editorial of the Cominform bureau organ; the formal acceptance of the Cominform bureau editorial and the self-justificatory statement on it issued by the polit bureau to the party ranks go to prove the same conclusively.

**Comrades :** The remarkable political initiative and vigilance you have shown, for the first time in the history of the party, since the editorial of the Cominform bureau, the sharp criticism you have levelled against the self-justificatory statement of the polit bureau and its anti-party titoist organisational methods, gave a rude shock to the polit bureau and enabled it to come out of its mire of bureaucracy and contempt for the cadre, its mood of complacency and self-justification and brought it to its senses. It also made members of the central committee who were resisting to make a complete turn—some of them being more to the left than the polit bureau—wake up and think very seriously. Your political initiative, vigilance and sharp criticism of the polit bureau, along with the documents prepared by the Andhra members of the central committee and the rich experience of the Telangana and the Andhra agrarian armed struggle they had given—helped the central committee a great deal to make a complete turn and chalk out broad lines of new strategy and tactics of the Indian revolution as a basis for the unification of our party. This is a hopeful sign for the great future of our party.

### **Political & Organisational Decision of the Old Central Committee**

It was in this background that the old central committee met and after serious political discussions, merciless criticism and self-criticism, arrived at the following main political and organisational decisions unanimously.

(1) The central committee discussed the "Report on Left-Deviation inside the Communist Party of India" submitted by the members of the central committee from Andhra, amended it and adopted it.

It is an elaborate document containing the critique of "People's Democracy", "Agrarian Question", "Tactical Line" and other important documents of the polit bureau, which lays bare its bankrupt left-sectarian policies and their roots and delivers them a smashing blow. It also contains a broad assessment of the political thesis of the second party congress.

(2) The central committee discussed the documents "Main Features of the Indian People's Democratic Struggles and the

Main Task of the Communist Party" and "People's Democracy" which had been prepared by the polit bureau after the editorial of the organ of the Cominform bureau, and found them unsatisfactory. The central committee decided to redraft the document "Main Features" as a positive resolution, including the formulations of 'people's democracy' in the light of the discussions and amendments of the central committee, removing the critical part in it.

### **MAIN FORMULATIONS ON THE PRESENT SITUATION**

This resolution is yet to be drafted. We are giving here very briefly the summary of the main formulations (excepting those on people's democracy) which will be covered by the resolution—at the same time dealing, in slightly greater detail, with some of those points which require clarification or are issues of controversy. They are as follows :

The historic victory of the people's forces, under Soviet leadership, in the anti-fascist world war; the tremendous weakening of imperialism on a world scale; the demarcation of the opposing world class forces into two camps—the imperialist anti-democratic camp led by the US imperialists and the anti-imperialist democratic camp led by the USSR ; the growth and consolidation of people's democracies in Eastern Europe ; the enormous strengthening of the Chinese democratic forces led by the Communist Party of China, which subsequently led to the total liberation of 475,000,000 people ; the consequent undermining of imperialist authority in colonial and dependent countries and the deepening of the crisis of the colonial system as the most important component part of the general crisis of capitalism—all these have led not only to an increase in the sweep of the colonial people's national-liberation struggles, but also to its rise to new qualitative levels viz that of armed struggle against imperialism and its native servitors in many of the colonial and dependent countries. And the factor of decisive importance in the national-liberation movements is that in the majority of the colonial countries, the working class and the Communist Party have emerged as the recognised leader of the national struggle.

The post-war revolutionary upsurge in India, the innumerable strikes and the number of general strikes, the great peasant

struggles, the states' people's struggles, the mighty demonstrations all over the country, the RIN mutiny, strikes in the police and army units, the beginning of the Telangana armed struggle etc., showed that the Indian liberation struggle had come to a qualitatively higher stage. And the determining factor in this stage was that the working class, led by the Communist Party, stood at the head of these struggles and that the Indian big bourgeoisie had finally betrayed the revolution and completely gone over to the camp of imperialism.

Unable, under these circumstances, to rule in the old way, British imperialism bestowed sham independence on India. Nevertheless India remained essentially a colony of Britain, with USA entering the scene more and more. After the Mountbatten partition both India and Pakistan remain dependent on British imperialism—economically, politically and militarily—with British capital increasing its dominating position in the economy of the two dominions.

### **The Big Bourgeoisie**

The Indian big bourgeoisie, which is closely linked with feudal elements and usurious capital and which from its very inception had been closely bound up with British imperialists, had not been capable of or inclined towards in kind of active struggle against imperialism. Though they had attempted in the past, through the leaders of the National Congress, to utilise the mass movement for gaining concessions for their own benefit their decisive and constant endeavour had been to prevent the mass struggle from growing into a struggle for the freedom of the masses and hence they had always come to a compromise with British imperialism and had reckoned on its support in their struggle against the proletariat and the toiling masses of India. If in the past they had represented some opposition against imperialism, then with the Mountbatten deal they completely and openly went over to the camp of imperialism. They have become the collaborators and servitors of imperialism, dreading the advancing tide of revolution.

Some conflicts of interest between imperialism and the big bourgeoisie do still remain or arise on occasions—though the

bourgeoisie has not the independent status to 'solve them at governmental level'. 'The transfer of power', the change from the direct rule of the imperialists to indirect rule, has elevated the Indian big bourgeoisie to the role of junior partners of imperialism, exercising authority and repressive powers over the masses, united with the feudal and princely elements against the tide of popular advance, negotiating and manoeuvring within the camp of imperialism, not without conflicts of interests, with its own trading, military and expansionist ambitions in Asia, but essentially a secondary and dependent power within the camp of imperialism.

### **Tasks of the Communists**

In this colonial set up of present-day India, in the further advance of its national-liberation struggle, the tasks of the Indian Communists are, as the editorial of the Cominform bureau organ has pointed out, to draw upon the experience of the national-liberation movements of China and other countries and "to strengthen the alliance of the working class with all the peasantry, to fight for the introduction of the urgently needed agrarian reform and on the basis of the common struggle for freedom and national independence of their country, against the Anglo-American imperialists oppressing it and against the reactionary big bourgeoisie and feudal princes collaborating with them—to unite all classes, parties, groups and organisations willing to defend the national independence and freedom of India".

The editorial has pointed out the enormous significance of the victory of the Chinese people against the combined forces of the reactionary Kuomintang and American imperialism to the national-liberation movement in the colonies and dependencies like India. The editorial and the Peking manifesto of the Trade Union Conference of Asian and Australasian countries have pointed out that the Chinese path is the path of struggle and victory for the national-liberation movement in India and other colonial countries.

On the Chinese path, the further advance of the Indian national-liberation struggle depends, essentially, on two things :

### **United Front of All Anti-Imperialist Classes**

First, to create a powerful united national front of the "broad masses of peasantry and intellectuals, the petty bourgeoisie in the cities and the national bourgeoisie who suffer from vexations and restrictions imposed by imperialism and its lackeys"—to wage the struggle against imperialism and its native agents. This front has to be created under the leadership of the working class and its vanguard, the Communist Party, equipped with Marxism, Leninism, mastering revolutionary strategy and tactics, breathing the spirit of irreconcilability to enemies and the spirit of proletarian discipline and organisation.

In building the united national front, several points have to be kept in mind ; viz

(i) The basis of the front is alliance of the workers and toiling peasantry under the leadership of the working class.

### **Rich Peasantry & Middle Peasantry**

(ii) The rich peasantry who carry on feudal exploitation will have to be treated as the enemies of the front, though a distinction will be made between them and the landlords in the matter of expropriation of their land after the revolution.

Those rich peasants who do not carry on feudal exploitation will be allies.

The middle peasantry will be firm allies of the proletariat in the democratic revolution.

### **Middle Bourgeoisie**

(iii) The big bourgeoisie are the monopolist groups, mainly Gujarati-Marwari—who are the agents of imperialism and who at the same time seek to dominate, in alliance with imperialism, the internal market by oppressing and exploiting the regions of other nationalities which are economically or culturally backward. The big bourgeoisie is the enemy of the front.

There are other sections of the bourgeoisie who, though not big by themselves, yet are intimately connected with feudal or big bourgeois interests and hence are enemies of the democratic revolution.

The middle bourgeoisie are the non-monopoly sections who are injured by the imperialist-big bourgeois cut-throat competition



and who have little or no links with the feudal forces. Hence they may be progressive to a certain extent. The middle bourgeoisie also includes the rising bourgeoisie of nationalities dominated or suppressed by the Gujrati-Marwari big business. But not all of them would be progressive. There are some sections which have direct links with big business or interests bound with feudal exploitation. Though these sections of the bourgeoisie of backward provinces show some dissatisfaction against the ruling bourgeoisie on the question of linguistic provinces, just as the big bourgeoisie shows some dissatisfaction against the imperialists on matters of industrialisation, etc. yet, whatever tactical use we might make of that dissatisfaction, they cannot be considered as even temporary allies in the democratic front. Only the rest of the sections of the bourgeoisie which stand up against the big bourgeoisie on the question of linguistic provinces, as on other issues, can be considered as an ally.

With regard to the role of the middle bourgeoisie we must be clear. In view of the extreme accentuation of the general crisis of capitalism and sharp polarisation of class forces, they have to be considered only as "fellow-travellers", "at one or another time", "during one or another period", not as "reliable or stable members of anti-imperialist camp".

(iv) The development of the united front is a process of struggle for unity—beginning from a joint demonstration or action for the most easily understood demands of the different sections, to the highest form of struggle for land, peace, bread and independence on a more permanent basis. And the most effective way to build it is to build it from below.

But it does not preclude agreement at the top between leaders and individuals of different classes, organisations or parties. Such agreements often become essential to facilitate unity from below—provided a systematic exposure of the activities of the disruptive leaders is carried out and the influence of bourgeoisie nationalism fought in a determined manner.

### **The Second Essential of the Chinese Path**

The second essential point of the Chinese path is that the national-liberation struggle has to be waged by means of armed guerilla warfare in the countryside, the formation of liberation bases and

liberation armies—culminating in the seizure of power all over the country. This armed struggle is closely linked up with and is inseparable from the peasants' agrarian revolution without which it would be impossible to organise armed struggle.

### **Feudal Relations Dominant— Agrarian Revolution the Axis**

In the rural areas of India feudal and semifeudal relations are still dominant. The imperialist rulers have deliberately kept this feudal and semifeudal agrarian frame-work so as to serve their robber economy. The denial of this landed the old polit bureau in left-sectarian analysis. However this should not blind us to the growth of considerable capitalist relations in the womb of feudalism in India. If we ignore this phenomenon there arises the danger of swinging to the other extreme from our previous sectarian line leading to the failure in organising the agricultural labour or farm servants so as to boldly lead their wage struggles. Another factor to be noted in this connection is—the agricultural labourers of our colonial country are different from those in the advanced capitalist countries, because of their continued subjection to feudal and colonial exploitation, besides their wage-slavery.

This huge section of agricultural labour in our country—in reality a pauperised peasant—will act as the vanguard of the agrarian revolution and is a vital factor in the struggle for people's democratic revolution in the countryside.

Nevertheless feudal relations being dominant, the agrarian revolution is the axis of the Indian national-liberation movement and "land to the tiller" is the main slogan of urgently-needed agrarian reform as well as of unity in struggle of the broad masses of the peasantry.

### **Armed Struggle on the Agenda**

The Indian national-liberation struggle had assumed a wide sweep, reached a qualitatively new level and entered on a new and higher phase of its development after the second world war. It had struck terror into the hearts of both the Indian big bourgeoisie and imperialism, which resulted in their collaboration.

The Indian big bourgeoisie betrayed the national-liberation struggle and completely, and openly went over to the camp of imperialism, which culminated in the Mountbatten award. The collaborationist regime of the imperialist-feudal-landlord-big bourgeoisie let loose fascist white terror and unleashed a civil war to stem the advancing tide of revolution and to wipe out the revolutionary mass movement altogether. The growing tide of the agrarian revolution and the civil war let loose by the Nehru-Patel government placed the question of armed resistance on the agenda.

We, Indian communists failed to understand the significance of this development and to change the perspective and tactics of the growth of our national-liberation struggle, learning from the glorious revolutionary experience of China and the other Southeast Asian countries, Vietnam, Malaya, Burma, marching along the path of China. We stuck dogmatically to the conception of political general strike and countrywide insurrection, under the cover of the seemingly revolutionary slogan of "We do not recognise anybody except Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin", and refused to learn from life experience of Telangana and the hill border regions of Mymensingh district.

This arises from a dogmatic and distorted conception of the hegemony of the proletariat in the struggle for national liberation—that the physical participation of the entire working class in action, i.e. political general strike and insurrection, is the exclusive method of establishing and exercising hegemony. The proletariat under the leadership of its vanguard detachment, the communist party, can establish its hegemony over the peasant masses and head the national-liberation movement in present day world conditions in colonies and semicolonies through armed guerilla resistance, by establishing liberated bases in rural areas, and forming the liberation army, combined with flexible tactics in cities, leading to the final liberation of the cities and capture of full power over the entire country.

This is the new experience which the world proletariat has acquired out of the Chinese revolution, which is a third world-significant event, after great October Socialist Revolution and

the victory of the anti-fascist forces under the leadership of the USSR in the second world war.

We pursued adventurist tactics with above wrong perspective of the growth of our revolution and brought the party and the mass movement to the verge of an abyss. The editorial of the organ of the Cominform bureau and the Peking conference called our attention to the rich experience of China and put before us the main task of leading the agrarian revolution and building up of a liberation army for the victory of the revolution.

There is a misconception in the minds of certain comrades as to the directive of the Cominform bureau of "the formation, when necessary internal conditions allow for it, of people's liberation armies" and armed struggle "becoming the main form of national-liberation movement, in *many* colonies and dependent countries".

Some of them seem to think that India is exempted from the Chinese path because it did not refer to *all* but only to "*many*" colonies and dependencies. This is now washed away by the subsequent editorial of the organ of the Cominform bureau of 19th May 1950, in which India is also put along with other countries where armed struggle is taking place and by the life experience in India too—of Telangana, Andhra, hill border regions of Mymensingh district.

Another section of the comrades, while accepting formally the Chinese path, argue as if the conditions are not ripe for carrying an armed guerilla resistance except in a very few areas and first preconditions have to be created slowly by winning of the majority of the people and building up people's unity through propaganda. Then one fine morning give a call for organising a liberation army and then proceed with armed struggle winning victory after victory to complete capture of power. This is nothing but underestimating the depth of discontent and disillusionment of the masses with the Congress raj, misunderstanding and misapplying Chinese experience, and refusing to see what life itself teaches here in our country.

These few years of Congress "ram rajya" have proved to the masses that it is the government of bloodsuckers and not of the people. All their old illusions that Congress would better their

lot have been completely shattered. On the other hand, they are convinced by their life experience that their lot is getting worsened day by day. "Congress is worse than the Britishers" is the common word on everybody's lips. It is maintaining its existence mainly on its bayonet. The people want this satanic raj to go. Majority of them do not know how to end it. But any act of resistance to white terror of the Congress government and the bloodsuckers from any quarter brings forth automatic sympathy from the broad masses of the people, even in the politically most backward parts of the country.

It is true that we have to contend against the leadership of the Socialist Party, lackeys of the Indian big bourgeoisie—who are spreading Gandhian ideology and putting forth the solution of the "ballot box" for the mitigation of the wretched conditions of the people. We have also to contend against the leadership of the left parties and groups, who are spreading legalistic and constitutionalist illusions to capitalise this discontent of the toiling masses. But what we have to realise is that we cannot counteract this bourgeois-reformist poison and legalist-constitutionalist illusion, spread by the socialist lackeys and left parties and groups through propaganda alone. We have to *combine judiciously* and carry on *simultaneously* propaganda, mass struggles, armed guerilla resistance and organisation of the party and mass organisations. To counterpose one against the other is to nullify all and the result is inactivity. The main precondition required, i.e. the mass desire that the ruling power should go and also the revolutionary position taken by a big section of the masses under the leadership of our party is already there. People are already on the move in their own way in certain areas, Telangana, Andhra, hill border regions of Mymensingh district; they have been carrying on guerilla warfare which can rightly be described as the beginning of the Indian democratic revolution. Reports appear in the daily press of strikes, agrarian struggles, actions of militant resistance and tribal revolts. While reformism sabotaged the mass struggles outright, left-sectarianism refused to give tactics suited to the existing conditions and level of mass consciousness and thereby allowing the enemy to smash the mass struggles, with

the same results. The objective conditions for starting guerilla resistance are there taking India as a whole, leaving aside some areas. The only thing required is for the party to utilise them. Our old yardstick of measuring the readiness of the masses for armed action by whether the overwhelming majority of the masses themselves are coming physically into the streets and have accepted the party's full political programme or not, has to be discarded. The thing to be noted is that guerilla resistance can and has to be started against the fascist terror basing on the general support of the masses.

This does not mean that we launch armed struggle immediately wherever we are and whatever may be the conditions. The way of going forward successfully is, by the party boldly initiating mass struggles basing on the level of the consciousness of the masses in different localities, combined with armed guerilla resistance, so as to develop them quickly to a higher phase of land distribution and village people's committees (jana panchayats). It is only by this that the revolutionary movement can be defended and extended to wider and wider areas, ultimately embracing the whole country. It is only by adopting armed guerilla warfare that the party would be strengthened and extended. Thus a strong party heading the armed guerilla warfare will be able to unite the toiling masses and mobilise all the anti-imperialist classes, establish liberated bases and organise liberation armies in areas topographically and otherwise suited for them, leading to the final capture of power and complete liberation of the entire country.

This does not in the least mean that the central committee is minimising the role of the organisation and asking comrades everywhere in India to outright start resistance actions even without setting the house in order, reorganising the party machine smashed by left-sectarianism, educating and convincing the comrades on the new line and making minimum preliminary preparations. These minimum organisational steps have to be taken immediately by the party committees everywhere. We will not launch armed resistance actions on our own without fulfilling the above mentioned minimum immediate jobs. But we cannot

sit quiet when either the enemy attacks us or the masses are on the move, under the plea of not having fulfilled the above mentioned minimum jobs. In that case, we have to fulfil them while leading masses and carrying on resistance against the fascist attack of the enemy.

### **In Cities and Industrial Centres**

With this perspective of the Chinese path for people's democratic revolution in India, we have to use flexible tactics in the cities and industrial centres—illegal propaganda, various types of protest actions and demonstrations, strikes, armed actions, etc.—whichever form is best suited to the particular place and moment, in order to conserve and strengthen the revolutionary movement. We have to co-ordinate this movement in the cities and industrial centres with the armed guerilla struggle in the rural areas and conduct the general movement with a combined plan.

The Peking manifesto says : "Working men and women in the cities, under the white terror, apply with good judgement and elasticity the tactics which can best ensure the defence of your interests. Active trade unionists, you must be present wherever the masses are, even in the trade unions, organisations and institutions led by the reactionaries. You must organise the day-to-day struggle of the masses for the defence of their interests, particularly to oppose slave labour and every kind of discrimination. In this way you should prepare and gather forces to organise, when a favourable opportunity arises, broad mass movements which will deliver decisive blows to the reactionary forces."

### **Fight for Peace**

The imperialist anti-democratic camp, led by US imperialists, caught in a crisis, is feverishly preparing for another war to gain world supremacy. But, without suppressing the national-liberation movement in the colonies, the imperialists cannot consider themselves fully prepared for unleashing an aggressive war against the camp of peace and democracy. The imperialist aggressors are in fact, already waging war against the colonial

liberation movement on a vast territory extending from South Korea to Burma, Malaya, Vietnam and Indonesia.

For this offensive against the liberation struggles of the Southeast Asian colonies, the imperialists today seek to make India their main satellite base.

In these conditions, the struggle of the Indian people against their imperialist oppressors is a vital part of the common struggle of the working people throughout the world against the Anglo-American instigators of a new war, for peace and democracy. The success of the national-liberation struggle of India strengthens the world front of peace and this struggle will be her most effective contribution to the common struggle of the world peace camp.

Along with this struggle, the people of India have to play an increasingly wide and active part in the peace campaign led by the World Peace Congress by signature campaign for banning the atom bomb and by other actions and demonstrations. The game of the Anglo-American instigators of a new war and the subservient role of the Nehru government have to be exposed before the people. Thousands of peace committees have to be formed throughout the length and breadth of India, carrying on active agitation and campaign.

### **National Question**

On the question of nationalities, the polit bureau pursued since the second party congress a reactionary policy of subservience to big-bourgeois chauvinism by opposing all national movements, movements for linguistic-cultural provinces and dissolution of feudal states (as in Hyderabad) and by advocating in all cases (as in the case of Kashmir) joining the Indian Union by itself as the demand of the Communist Party. In countering the demand for autonomous linguistic provinces and dissolution of states (Hyderabad) it advanced the left-sectarian slogan of self-determination for toilers as against self-determination of nations. In doing so the polit bureau revised and distorted the Lenin-Stalin principles on the question of self-determination of nations. Under the pretext of fighting the deviation towards the chauvinism of the bourgeoisie, of the suppressed nationalities, the polit bureau



strengthened the chauvinism of the ruling big bourgeoisie, the agent of Anglo-American imperialism.

On the national question the Communist Party stands and fights for equality of all nations, and semi-nationalities growing as nations, equal development of their language, culture and economic life, self-determination of all nationalities and semi-nationalities to the point of secession, unity of all these nations into a voluntary union.

The demand for equality of all languages and the formation of autonomous linguistic provinces is a progressive, democratic, anti-imperialist demand. It is directed against princely autocracy and is an instrument for the dissolution of princely states. It is directed against the oppression and exploitation of the ruling big bourgeoisie. It is directed against partition, all forms of communal division and all forms of racial, communal and national discriminations. Above all, it is directed against foreign imperialist domination. The most important driving force of the various movements of the nationalities is the peasantry, fighting under the leadership of the working class.

The reactionary elements of various nationalities in India (princes, landlords and reactionary section of the bourgeoisie), are utilising the movements for autonomous linguistic provinces to serve their reactionary purposes. The task of the Communist Party is to seize the initiative and lead these movements as part of the general struggle for national independence and people's democracy, for the abolition of princedom and all survivals of feudalism, for abolition of landlordism and land to the tiller.

Thus the demands for Vishalandhra, Samyukta Karnatak, Samyukta Maharashtra, United Kerala, United Bengal, autonomous regions for tribal and semi-tribal peoples, etc., are progressive democratic demands. These demands can be achieved by overthrowing the rule of imperialism and its agents in the Indian Union and Pakistan, i.e. the big bourgeoisie and the feudal classes.

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(3) Besides the above two documents, a resolution on Mao, prepared by the polit bureau was discussed, amended and adopted. In that resolution, an apology has been tendered for the slanderous

attack in the press on Mao, throwing to the winds all principles of fraternal relations with brother parties and their leaders ; anti-Marxist criticism of Mao's formulations in his *New Democracy* made by the polit bureau in its documents has been sharply condemned and criticised ; lessons for the Indian democratic revolution have been drawn from Mao's valuable writings and the rich experience of the Chinese revolution.

(4) The old polit bureau could not produce any collective self-criticism of its own but each of its members submitted his own individual self-critical report before the central committee. These reports came under sharp scrutiny and criticism from the members of the central committee. In the course of the discussions over the self-critical reports of the members of the polit bureau, each of the members of the central committee made a short self-critical review of his own role and activities mainly covering the period since the second party congress. The collective discussions over the self-critical reports of the members of the polit bureau and the members of the central committee helped all to understand the role and failings of every member of the central committee—each accepting the collective criticism made in the central committee meeting.

(5) "A Short Report on the Left-Sectarianism in the Organisational Activities of the Polit Bureau, the Main Organisational Tasks before the Central Committee and Directives for the Proper Functioning of the Central Committee and the Polit Bureau in Future", submitted by the Andhra members of the central committee present at the meeting, was also discussed, amended and adopted by the central committee.

(6) The central committee on the basis of the above report dissolved the polit bureau and removed Ranadive from the post of general secretaryship for the following crimes :

Ranadive has been the initiator, executor and dogged defender of the Trotsky-Tito type of left-sectarian political line. The polit bureau had fallen in line, conciliated and abetted him in carrying out his anti-Leninist, liquidationist line, which has resulted in the party and mass movement being brought to the point of total disruption. The manifestations of that line are :

(a) Repudiation of the Lenin-Stalin teachings on imperialism and colonial revolution which resulted in equating the present stage of Indian revolution to the socialist stage.

(b) Sabotage of the agrarian revolution and armed struggle and adventurist tactics in towns and villages which brought the mass movement to the verge of total disruption.

(c) Bringing in of the titoist organisational methods, which resulted in almost disrupting the party organisation, suppressing inner-party democracy and poisoning inner-party life.

(d) Anti-international attitude and violation of the very principles of fraternal relations with brother parties, which resulted in overt and covert slander of brother parties and their leaders, supreme complacency and lack of vigilance against spies, etc.

(e) Rejection of all creative Marxism under the slogan "we recognise nobody except Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin" and finally distortion of all Marxism-Leninism to suit its own left-sectarian adventurist purposes.

The polit bureau as a whole was responsible for all the crimes stated above. But this does not mean either that every member of the polit bureau was responsible for all the crimes stated above or that every member was responsible in the same degree, taking each crime singly. The different members of the polit bureau were responsible for the above crimes in varying degrees, which will be given in a short report on the organisational activities of the polit bureau as adopted by the central committee.

Regarding suppression of documents, it was found that, with the purpose of keeping the party politically blind and trading on ignorance, Ranadive, with the help of Adhikari, was responsible for the suppression of international documents. Ranadive was further responsible for suppression of several important inner-party documents.

(7) At the second party congress, a central committee of 31 had been elected. Such a big central committee was elected because the congress failed to take note of the fascist terror and impending illegality facing the party. If the central committee was to really discharge its functions as the effective political

leadership of the entire party and the revolutionary movement in India, it ought to have been a compact functioning body, instead of an unwieldy one. Subsequent experience demonstrated the inadvisability of such a big number for the central committee. On the basis of the political-organisational discussions and decisions, the central committee proceeded to reconstitute itself as a compact functioning body. In the extremely illegal circumstances prevailing at present the central committee could not venture to think of a party congress and decided to proceed on the basis of the other alternative provided in the party constitution, i.e. reconstituting the central committee and convening the plenum (article X, sections 1 and 4 of the constitution taken together). Out of the central committee of 31, one comrade had died, six were in jail, two had been removed from the central committee and one had to be excluded from the central committee and kept under observation and enquiry because of serious charges of anti-party activity pending against him. All except two of the remaining members of the central committee had met and taken the decision of reconstituting itself and fixed the number at eleven, till the plenum is convened to discuss everything and finally decide the issue. In the opinion of the old central committee, the principles which, as far as possible, had to be kept in view in selecting personnel of a new central committee were as follows :

(a) Unreservedly accept the new line of the party.

(b) Political and organisational capacities to get things done. In critical situation no vacillations either opportunistic or political, but stand like a rock amidst storm. (The political-organisational capacities of individual have to be judged in relation to his past activities).

(c) Even if on his own he is not able to give correct solutions to major problems, at least he must have the ear to learn from the party ranks and pose organisational, political and mass problems before the central committee and enrich the central committee with experience.

(d) The central committee members who had been the propounders and fanatical executors of this sectarian line and

adopted trotskyite-titoist methods of organisation, who have refused even to think about their sectarian line even after the editorial of the information bureau organ appeared, and who after months of discussion of the new line refused to orientate inspite of the sharp criticism of the ranks, must as far as possible not be entrusted with heavy responsibility of the central committee and polit bureau membership until they prove in practice that they are once again fit for being entrusted with such responsibility.

The election of the new central committee took place based on the self-criticism of the members of the polit bureau and the central committee.\*

Though the number of members of the reconstituted central committee was fixed at 11 as a provisional arrangement till the plenum is convened, only nine could be chosen for the present from among those members of the old central committee who are outside jail and from other comrades in provinces known to the central committee. On the basis of the guiding principles stated above, it was decided to fill up the rest for the two places by the new central committee from among the comrades in the provinces and the members of the old central committee not elected to the new central committee, in course of time, on the basis of further discussions and practical work.

Among the nine elected for the new central committee four members of the central committee are taken from Andhra in which the member of the polit bureau from Andhra is included; one member of the old polit bureau from Bengal who had not been an active participant in the old polit bureau's functioning and had little to do with its turkish-titoite methods of organisation ; a member of the provincial committee from Bengal who had been the leader of the armed struggle in Mymensingh ; one of the members of the central committee from Kerala ; the member of the central committee from Assam who, though he surrendered to the polit bureau when badgered, had taken to organising armed

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*\*The reconstituted Central Committee consisted of the following nine members of whom the first three were members of the polit bureau: (1) C. Rajeswara Rao (general secretary), (2) M. Basavapunniah, (3) Biresh Misra, (4) R. Sundaraya, (5) D. Venkateswara Rao, (6) Somnath Lahiri, (7) Moni Singh, (8) E. M. S. Nambudiripad, (9) S. V. Parulekar.*

guerilla struggle on the basis of his experience ; a member of the central committee from Maharashtra who had initiated the agrarian struggle in Ahmednagar, and has wide experience of trade-union and peasant movement. This is by no means an ideal central committee, but a central committee best under the circumstances. If we approach the problem from ideal standards, we cannot have a central committee at all. This does not mean that there are no comrades in the provinces other than the Myemensingh district comrade fit for the central committee, but the old central committee could not estimate the cadre in the provinces immediately. That is why only nine could be elected inspite of the fixing of the number at eleven. Comrades have to understand that these decisions of the old central committee are of a provisional nature till the meeting of the plenum which is the final authority, intended to unify and rebuild the party and to rehabilitate the mass movement and put it on the rails of armed struggle.

(8) The central committee decided to release the following documents adopted by it to the ranks for discussion and also decided to start a forum for facilitating the innerparty discussion :

(a) Critique on the three polit bureau documents, i.e. "People's Democracy", "Agrarian Question" and "Tactical Line".

(b) Political Resolution.

(c) Resolution on Mao.

(d) Organisational report on the left-sectarian activities of the polit bureau.

It also decided to hold a plenum of the new central committee including the representatives of the provincial committees in about six months' time to finalise the drafts and take final organisational decisions about central committee and provincial committees, etc.

Meanwhile the party units have to carry on the day-to-day activity of the party on the basis of the political line given in the drafts for discussion and lead the mass revolutionary movement.

(9) The central committee decided to refer to an inquiry commission the cases of two of its members who had been removed from it by the old polit bureau and the case of a member

of the polit bureau who was reported to have been in contact with party renegades.

(10) The central committee decided to reestablish close fraternal relations with brother parties ; to invite the criticism of the Cominform bureau on its political and organisational decisions, and to get the opinion of other parties— specially that of the CPSU(B) and Chinese Communist Party.

### **DECISIONS OF THE NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

The new central committee has met and taken the following important decisions besides certain others:

(1) It elected a general secretary (member in the old polit bureau from Andhra) and a polit bureau of three, including the general secretary. The other two members of the polit bureau are one from among the members of the central committee from Andhra and the member of the central committee from Assam. The new central committee has no alternative except to elect a polit bureau of three, because a polit bureau of more than three is out of question in central committee of nine.

(2) The new central committee set itself the task of cleaning the organisational mess created by the left-sectarian line and titoite methods of the old polit bureau. It took important decisions regarding the reorganisation of the provincial committees of Bengal, Bihar, Tamilnadu, Kerala, Assam and Maharashtra and Bombay.

It also asked the provincial committees to review such of the cases of disciplinary actions taken against committees and individuals in the last two years, as need to be reconsidered, and take suitable measures in the light of the new political line.

The central committee withdraws the documents of the old polit bureau—"People's Democracy", "Agrarian Question", "Tactical Line"—for the present. Other documents of the old polit bureau will also be reviewed and necessary action taken later. But it asks the comrades not to take any document or circular of the old polit bureau or fractions of mass fronts as authoritative any longer.

(3) As the new central committee had not had sufficient time to finalise the following documents, it decided that the polit

bureau should finalise them and circulate them to the ranks for discussion.

The documents are:

- (a) Tactics and tasks on the working class front ;
- (b) Tactics and tasks inside jails ;
- (c) Tactics and tasks on the student front ;
- (d) Tactics and tasks on the agrarian front (to be prepared).

Meanwhile the Andhra documents on the subject are to be circulated and comrades helped with the experience of Telangana and Andhra movements;

- (e) A draft on women's front.

(4) The new central committee decided to circulate the minutes of the meeting of the old central committee and the selfcritical reports of the members of the old polit bureau to the provincial committees in order to give them a better understanding of the decisions of the old and new central committees though it is not the normal practice to circulate the minutes of the central committee to lower units. The provincial committees can utilise this material, along with the documents issued on the new political line, for giving the lower party committees and ranks better conviction about the political and organisational decisions of the old and new central committees. The new central committee hopes this will help the political organisational unification of the party in this critical situation.

(5) As enjoined by the old central committee, the new central committee appointed a commission to enquire into the lack of vigilance against Titoite spies, on the part of the central organisations of the party.

### **Guarantees for the Correct Political Line**

The tradition of our party, specially since the "people's war" period, has been to swing like a pendulum from one extreme to the other. We need not go into the distant past to prove this. Suffice it to illustrate from the people's war period. For full six months [redacted] the dastardly attack by Hitler on the Soviet Union, our [redacted] along the bourgeois-nationalist path characterising it [redacted] Then we woke up and suddenly swung to [redacted] of "automatic liberation", of an



anti-Japanese front from workers to zamindars and religious preachers, and no-strike, no-struggle tactics in the name of "production". We continued this reformist policy and practice with some changes, i.e. we formally discarded the slogan of 'automatic liberation' but in practice followed the same line by trailing behind the big bourgeoisie and Congress leadership for more than two years after the war. Then we woke up suddenly like Rip Van Winkle at the end of 1947 to jump into left-sectarianism which has brought the party and the mass movement to the present plight of total disruption.

It is not necessary to write in detail how during the long period of 1942 to 1948 every time the central committee met, it used to come out with a resolution beating its breast and saying "We have underestimated this point", "overestimated that point", but this time "We have correctly estimated all points" and come to a "correct conclusion"—only to repeat the same sorrowful tale once again!

Comrades! In this background of our party history, you are perfectly justified in feeling sceptical this time also and asking "What is the guarantee that this time the central committee has chalked out a correct path?" It is the duty of the central committee to give you a convincing answer.

There exist three guarantees now which did not exist so strongly before :

(1) The direct political guidance of the Cominform bureau and political assistance of the brother parties, i.e. CPSU(B), Communist Party of China, etc. Our political decisions are based on the editorial of the organ of the Cominform bureau, Peking manifesto, documents of the comrades of the CPSU(B) and documents of Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communist Party which have rendered not only general political guidance, but also guidance on certain vital details.

*We can assure you that we will make the most earnest efforts to seek and obtain regular criticism from the Cominform bureau.*

(2) Our decisions are not only based upon the valuable theoretical and political material stated above, but also on the rich practical experience of Telangana, Andhra, the hill border regions of Mymensingh, etc. besides the costly lessons we have learnt from our right and left deviations.

(3) Never in the history of our party, either in the period of reformism or the period of sectarianism, inner-party democracy was properly established, on the contrary it was either crippled or destroyed completely. Never in the history of the party, the ranks and lower committees were associated with the shaping of the party policy, i.e. strategy and tactics. A mechanical division—like that in bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties—of political and practical functions of the party was made. The right of chalking out political line and taking important political decisions was arrogated to the central committee (which reduced itself to the polit bureau in the days of illegality) and practical work left to the "dumb ranks" of the party. Unity of theory and practice is one of the cardinal principles of Marxism. No mechanical separation of political and practical functions is permissible inside a communist party. Every party committee and every cell has to be a political and practical leader within the limits of their respective areas. Every party member has to participate constantly in inner-party life and contribute his or her share in shaping the party policy and tactics and arriving at important decisions. This is the surest guarantee against either the party going wrong or the party leadership running amuck as in the recent past.

The old and new central committee decided to forge this guarantee by firmly establishing inner-party democracy based on the fundamental organisational principles of democratic centralism. In pursuance of that aim, we have to immediately associate the ranks in hammering out the new line in all details, through organising widest possible inner-party discussions on the basis of international documents and documents of the old and new central committees and finalise the new line at the plenum.

Hence, comrades, you can march forward with confidence and extricate the party and the mass movement out of this dangerous situation, keeping the above stated guarantees in mind.

### **PRESENT CRITICAL SITUATION & THE MAIN TASK BEFORE THE PARTY**

"We have to remember that the enemies of the party won't sit quiet until we find methods of correcting the past mistakes and evolve a new line. They are already on the move with a view to

deliver smashing blows while the party is in political confusion and they want to wipe it out before it can hammer out a new line and reorientate itself on that basis. The imperialists and their agents, the Indian big business, unleashed a new wave of fascist terror unknown in the history of our country, not only against Telangana and Andhra districts of the Madras province, but on all our strongholds throughout the country, such as Kerala, Tamilnadu, eastern United Provinces, parts of Bihar, Bengal, Assam, Manipur, etc. The white terror and civil war let loose in Telangana and Madras province is no ordinary thing—shooting at sight of our party members and sympathisers, inhuman torture in specially built torture chambers, shooting down comrades by bringing them out of subjails, etc. Their plan is to wipe out our strongholds before the situation goes out of their control. The Congress government is making serious efforts under the guidance of the Anglo-American imperialists to square up its quarrels with the reactionary puppet government of Pakistan, not only to stem the tide of the revolution in the Indian subcontinent but also to help the imperialists to drown the revolutionary national-liberation movements in the countries of Southeast Asia. Another concrete purpose of these attempts at rapprochement is to sandwich the resistance areas like the hill border regions of Mymensingh district, Manipur, Tippera and others on the borders of the India and Pakistan.

"The leadership of the Socialist Party of India, the lackeys of big business, have let loose a barrage of lies and slander against the party. They are not only trying hard to isolate us from other progressive left groups, but also appealing to the Congress government to realise that this policy of armed struggle in the rural side is more dangerous than the previous adventurist tactics of our party, and to suppress us all the more vigorously and help them in their nefarious game.

"The renegades thrown out of the party are making every effort under the leadership of Joshi to disrupt the party and are waiting for a chance to split the party.

"In such a serious situation, the party cannot sit only discussing the new line. It has to carry on a twofold task simultaneously if it is at all serious about the guidance given in

the editorial of the information bureau organ and the Peking manifesto.

"Firstly, to clean all the sectarian and reformist rubbish and hammer out a new clearcut strategy and tactics.

"Secondly, to proceed steadily to put the party on the rails of armed struggle in the countryside and rebuild the movement in the cities and workingclass centres on the basis of our new line and tactics.

"To lose sight of either of the above and to forget that both are to be *simultaneously fulfilled* leads finally to liquidation of the party and the revolutionary movement altogether" ("Short Report on the Organisational Activity of the Polit Bureau" submitted by Andhra members of the central committee).

To fulfil the above two-fold tasks under conditions of such a critical situation, what is needed today is the maintenance of iron discipline inside the party—discipline based on the Lenin-Stalin principle of full inner-party democracy combined with strict centralisation. The central committee is glad to note the struggle that the comrades have already begun for the reassertion of inner-party democracy and congratulates the comrades on their invaluable contribution towards evolving the correct party line in the recent period. But the central committee, at the same time, cannot but feel concerned at certain harmful tendencies that are raising their head here and there. At places the slogan has been raised for reorganisation of leading party committees from below and so-called 'action committees' are sought to be formed which means reducing the party to splinter groups. These slogans do not at all help the party to break the stalemate but will lead the party towards utter disruption, and help the disruptors to undermine its unity. Such slogans strike at the very root of democratic centralisation—the struggle for which has begun today in the entire party. While pointing out this dangerous disruptive trend inside the party—a trend born however out of just indignation against the longstanding bureaucratism of the leadership—the central committee has full confidence in the party ranks that they will not allow the undermining of the discipline and unity of the party built through the toil and struggle of the past 20 years.

## **Our Strength and Opportunities**

Comrades! We need not despair. It is true that the party and the mass movement have suffered great loss and they have been brought to the point of total disruption, and that they have to be rebuilt on entirely new foundations. It is also true that the enemies of the party are laying plans to wipe them out completely. But there is yet time and material to rebuild the party and the mass movement, if we make an objective estimate of the opportunities and dangers facing the party and if we make a move quickly without wasting any more time and put our shoulders to the wheel as one man.

Comrades! Do not see only our weaknesses but see our strength also, see not only the dangers but also see the opportunities offered by the national and international conditions.

(1) In spite of innumerable obstacles, both internal and external, the glorious Telangana armed struggle—the beginning of the people's democratic revolution in India—has not only survived but extended to new areas inside the state and outside to Andhra districts of Madras province. Now armed struggle is being carried on in an area of 40,000 square miles with a population of 120 lakh (total area of Andhradesa is 120 thousand square miles and population 3 crore) situated in the heart of Andhradesa.

Armed warfare is being carried on in the hill border regions of Mymensingh district in an area of 1000 square miles with a population of about one lakh.

In some other areas of Assam, Tippera, eastern United Provinces, Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra, people are taking to arms to resist Congress fascist terror.

Reports appear in the daily newspapers of local strike, spontaneous actions of resistance against Congress terror regime, even from the most backward corners of our country. The militant mood and actions of the tribal people everywhere have to be specially noted in this connection. All these point to the red dawn that is appearing on the horizon and show us the path to march forward.

(2) The Congress government is thoroughly exposed before the entire people as the tool of the bloodsuckers, before its own following. They want this fascist raj to end, though they still suffer from legalistic and constitutionalist illusions and have not yet come to the path of armed struggle. It is merely a matter of time before they take to the path of armed struggle, if there is any force capable of boldly leading them. In spite of all our mistakes, our party stands out before the general mass of the people as the fearless and uncompromising champion of the cause of the toiling masses. It enjoys wide influence and prestige among them.

(3) The ruling class is in crisis, utter confusion and panic. All the signs of crisis inside the ruling class in India are clearly visible now. Tata-Birla conflict, conflict over monopolising air services, resignation of Tata's man Matthai and Birla's people filling up the central cabinet; Dalmia's falling away from the ruling clique of the Congress, his open charges in the press against the two big men of the Congress, Patel and Nehru; Congress going to pieces, open splits in every province, starting of new parties—UP rebel Congress legislators starting a new party, People's Congress, Sachar's group going out of the Congress in Punjab, Prakasham's affair in Andhra province, etc. all these are a few examples of the intensity of crisis and conflicts among the ruling class. This shows that the situation is ripe for the smashing of the ruling class by armed action of the peoples and for people taking their destiny into their hands.

(4) The radicalisation of the ranks of the left parties and the masses behind them is a very significant factor to be noted. In spite of the efforts of their leaders to keep them within the four corners of the ballot-box and so-called peaceful methods, they are taking to the path of militant struggles. The conference of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Maharashtra which has considerable influence among the peasantry recently passed a resolution accepting the teachings of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin as its guide and the lead of the editorial of the organ of the Cominform bureau. The United Socialist Organisation passed a

resolution condemning the role of the Congress government acting as the tool of the Anglo-American war-mongers.

Above all dissatisfaction is growing daily in the ranks of the Socialist Party against the pro-big-business and anti-people policies and practice of its leadership. The recent report of a split in the Bombay branch of the party over the question of militant forms of struggle is an instance to the point.

The urge for trade-union unity in the ranks of the different trade-union centres, the growing united opposition of the ranks to the black labour bills and the progress of the struggle for trade-union unity have shown you how great the opportunities are.

All the above examples are the first signs of the radicalisation of the ranks and masses of the left parties.

(5) The international situation is much more favourable for the revolutionary forces in India than ever before. The strength of the people's forces has grown immensely and the balance has further shifted in favour of the world democratic socialist camp, because of the world historic victory of the Chinese revolution against the combined forces of American imperialists and Kuomintang reactionaries, the tremendous growth of the peace movement all over the world, specially in Europe, against the Anglo-American war-mongers, the victorious advance of the armed liberation struggles of Asian countries—Vietnam, Philippines, South Korea, Malaya, Burma, Indonesia, etc. and above all the mighty growth in the strength of the Soviet Union—the imperialists are shaking in their shoes, seeing the writing on the wall. Now the world people's forces are in a position to give moral and material aid to the forces of the Indian people in their struggle for national liberation. In this connection we have to recollect the worldwide agitation carried on against the cruel death sentences on the Telangana heroes, which has at least made the Nehru government retrace its steps though temporarily.

Comrades! Such is our strength and such are the immensely favourable opportunities before us. The future of our party is in our hands. Let us act with confidence in the cause with coolness of judgement, with courage and steadfastness, keeping in mind

our strength and opportunities. Let us put our collective and individual effort to fulfil the immediate tasks facing us all.

The central committee appeals to you to:

(1) Contribute your best in hammering out the new strategy and tactics.

(2) Fight left and right disruption and rebuild the party firmly on the basis of democratic centralisation ; keep vigilance against spies and agent-provocateurs.

(3) Rebuild the mass movement in the town and countryside and put the movement in the agrarian areas on the rails of armed struggle.

(4) Develop the peace campaign as a part of the struggle for national liberation.

(5) Fraternise with the ranks of the left parties, mass organisations, groups and individuals to organise joint actions, and build the democratic front.

(6) Deepen your knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and learn to apply it to your daily problems.

VICTORY WILL BE OURS!



# **Report Of The Left-Sectarianism In The Organisational Activities Of The Polit Bureau And The Main Organisational Tasks Before The Central Committee And Directives For The Proper Functioning Of The Central Committee And The Polit Bureau Of The C.P.I In Future \***

Left-sectarianism has got its organisational methods which are in contradiction with the principles of organisational methods and style of work of the communist parties as laid down in the "Thesis on Organisation and Structure of the Communist Parties", adopted at the third congress of the Communist International in 1921, together with the "Statutes of the Communist International". These anti-party organisational methods of left-sectarianism together with its politics, especially as pursued by the PB, have worked havoc with the party and mass organisations during the last two years since the second party congress and have disrupted them and brought them to the point of liquidation. No PC—except the Andhra PC—has been sending organisational reports since the last two years as to the state of party and mass organisations, number of party members, their political level, the functions of cells and party committees, fractions etc. In fact neither the PB nor the PCs have made any serious efforts in this direction. In these circumstances it is not possible to place before you a comprehensive and detailed report

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*\* Submitted by three Andhra Central Committee Members before the Central Committee of the C.P.I. and amended and accepted in the Central Committee meeting in May-June 1950 and published in July 1950.*

of the damage caused by left-sectarianism to the organisation of the party and the present state of the party organisation. This will be possible only after the different provincial committees have prepared all-sided and detailed organisational reports, which have to be done later. Hence this document confines itself to the functioning of PB and CC, the PB's left-sectarian methods of organisation and style of work, the harm caused due to these to the party, directives for the proper functioning of the CC and PB, and their reconstitution on the basis of the principles of the party organisation as laid down by the abovementioned thesis of the Communist International and in the light of the revolutionary tasks facing the party at present.

### **Democratic Centralism—the Main Organisational Principle of the Party**

"The organic unity in the communist party organisation must be attained through democratic centralisation" says the CI. All the other organisational principles of the party and the style of work emerge from the abovementioned main organisational principle of democratic centralisation. Hence it is necessary to quote in full from the thesis and the statutes of the Communist International regarding the question:

"Democratic centralisation in the communist party organisation must be real synthesis, a fusion of centralism and proletarian democracy. This fusion can be achieved only on the basis of constant common activity, constant common struggle of the entire party organisation. Centralisation in the communist party organisation does not mean formal and mechanical centralisation but a centralisation of communist activities, that is to say the formation of a strong leadership, ready for war and at the same time capable of adaptability. A formal or mechanical centralisation is the centralisation of the 'power' in the hands of an industrial bureaucracy, dominating over the rest of the membership or over the masses of the revolutionary proletariat standing outside the organisation. Only the enemies of the communists can assert that the communist party conducting the proletarian mass struggle and centralising the communist leadership is trying to rule over the revolutionary proletariat.

Such an assertion is a lie. Neither is any rivalry for power nor any contest for supremacy within the party at all compatible with the fundamental principles of democratic centralism adopted by the Communist International.

"In the organisation of the old, non-revolutionary labour movement, there has developed an all-pervading dualism of the same nature as that of the bourgeois state, namely, the dualism between the bureaucracy and the 'people'. Under this baneful influence of bourgeois environment there has developed a separation of functions, a substitution of barren, formal democracy for the living association of common endeavour and the splitting up of the organisation into active functionaries and passive masses. Even the revolutionary labour movement inevitably inherits this tendency to dualism and formalism to a certain extent from the bourgeois environment.

"The communist party must fundamentally overcome these contrasts by systematic and persevering political and organising work and by constant improvement and revision.

"In transforming a socialist mass party into a communist party, the party must not confine itself to merely concentrating the authority in the hands of its central leadership while leaving the old order unchanged. Centralisation should not merely exist on paper, but be actually carried out, and this is possible of achievement only when the members at large will feel this authority as a fundamentally efficient instrument in their common activity and struggle. Otherwise it will appear to the masses as a bureaucracy within the party and therefore likely to stimulate opposition to all centralisation, to all leadership, to all stringent discipline. Anarchism is the opposite pole of bureaucracy.

"Merely formal democracy in the organisation cannot remove either bureaucratic or anarchical tendencies, which have found fertile soil on the basis of just that democracy. Therefore the centralisation of the organisation, i.e. the aim to create a strong leadership, cannot be successful if its achievement is sought on the basis of formal democracy. The necessary preliminary conditions are the development and maintenance of living

associations and mutual relations within the party between the directing organs and members, as well as between the party and the masses of the proletariat outside the party" (*Principles of Party Organisation*).

Further,

"The Communist International and its sections are built up on the basis of democratic centralism, the fundamental principles of which are: (a) election of all the leading committees of the party, subordinate and superior (by general meetings of the party members, conferences, congresses and international congresses); (b) periodical reports by leading party committees to their constituents; (c) decisions of superior party committees to be obligatory for subordinate committees, strict party discipline and prompt execution of the decisions of the Communist International, of leading committees and of the leading party centres.

"Policy questions may be discussed by the members of the party and by party organisations until such time as a decision is taken upon them by the competent party committee. After a decision has been taken by the congress of the Communist International, by the congress of the respective sections, or by leading committees of the Comintern and of its various sections, these decisions must be unreservedly carried out even if a section of the party membership or of the local party organisations are in disagreement with it.

"In cases where a party exists illegally, the superior party committees may appoint the subordinate committees and coopt members on their own committees, subject to subsequent endorsement by the competent superior party committees."

No further comments are necessary. The question is dealt with clearly and sharply in the above extracts themselves.

### **State of the Party Organisation before the Second Party Congress**

Right-reformism had been the dominant deviation inside the party for a pretty long time, till the second party congress. It liquidated in practice the conception of the hegemony of the proletariat in the democratic revolution, though it had been chanting this like a 'mantram' the real meaning of which was masked. It made the

party trail behind the Congress bourgeoisie before the people's war period, and both the Congress and the League leadership since the people's war period till the second party congress, i.e. 1943 to 1947 end. Much worse, it had made the party trail behind the British imperialist enslavers during the people's war period, under the plea of "saving the Soviet Union", the fatherland of the world proletariat from nazi attack and "not disrupting the world anti-fascist front" with the slogans of 'no strike', 'no struggle' etc. This anti-proletarian outlook expressed itself in the practical activity of the party in the form of not basing on the basic revolutionary classes — proletariat and town poor in the towns, agricultural labour and toiling peasants in the villages; but to base on the vacillating and exploiting classes of the democratic front — petty-bourgeoisie in towns, middle and rich peasants in the villages. During the people's war period we even trailed behind reactionaries and enemies of the democratic revolution like landlords, liberal toadies of imperialism etc. This resulted in trailing behind revolutionary mass upsurge, refusal to organise the struggles of the masses, refusal to lead them on militant lines when those struggles were launched, heading them hesitatingly but sabotaging at the first opportunity. In the people's war period strikes and other mass struggles were altogether banned under the plea of "not hampering production and playing into the hands of the fifth column" and that it might run away with the masses. In essence this outlook is one of class collaboration and humanitarian approach to the masses.

Right-reformism has its organisational methods consistent with politics. It had smuggled many organisational methods and much style of work of the social-democratic parties and liberal-bourgeois parties gradually and stealthily inside the party. It had departed to the right too far from the principle of democratic centralisation.

(1) The liberal-bourgeois organisational principle of federalism and formal democracy had penetrated into the party indirectly. Party committees were to be elected not on the basis of democratic centralisation, but on the basis of representation to groups, regions and other considerations. Hence the liberal-

bourgeois practice of 'balance of power' and opportunist compromises between groups and individuals had also permeated inside the party.

The enforcement of the revolutionary iron discipline became impossible and "substitution of barren, formal democracy for the living association of common endeavour and the splitting up of the organisation into active functionaries and passive masses (i.e. party members—cc)" had come in its place.

(2) A mechanical and un-Marxist division was made between political and practical leadership of the party. The CC was declared political leader while the other committees and cells practical leader, which in practice meant the other party committees and cells have to follow blindly the political lead given by the CC and must not discharge their function of actively participating in the inner-party life for the shaping of the party line and tactics.

A systematic ideological and political emasculation of the party was resorted to; reading of classics was discouraged under the plea of "abstract Marxism"; conducting of the party schools had become a rare thing; even in the schools that were conducted, no theoretical education was given, only party policy and the 'tips' for carrying that policy were given.

(3) Bureaucracy from above and formal democracy and in discipline from below had become a common thing inside the party. Each unit demands formal democracy from the higher unit, while itself practising bureaucracy on the unit below.

An extract from the document of the Andhra PC called "Organisational Review" prepared soon after the congress gives a clear picture of the point under consideration.

"The party leadership and party members have not been maintaining a living association with the masses, paying heed to their opinions and learning from them. Therefore decisions from above were being forced upon party members and the masses. The decisions of uniting with zamindars in order to grow more food, giving up strikes for increasing production, one-fourth sharecropping agreement, supporting the demand of separate electorates of the scheduled castes federation, reducing our paper

to two pages, banning editorials being written—these and other decisions were since 1943 forced by the central committee upon the party and the masses. The provincial committee, while sending its disagreements with these decisions of the central committee, acted like a post office and imposed these decisions on the lower committees. Relating to this there were also other decisions which the PC forced upon the lower committees. In the same way, district and taluq committees forced the party decisions upon party members and the masses. Bureaucracy in the party developed in this form to be the main danger....

"As a result of party going along the wrong path and passing contradictory resolutions during the last six years, the confidence in party policy and party leadership has become shattered. When the new CC resolution came out it became common for party members to ask: 'What guarantee is there that this will not be changed either.' Due to party leadership having forced resolutions and decisions upon them in the past, and as a reaction to bureaucracy, indiscipline (anarchism) has grown inside the party. Today this has spread like a disease to the whole of the party. It has become a habit with party members to gossip outside their units about party affairs. It is also happening that they carry out only those party decisions which they like and keep quiet about the others, or even when they know that they are going against party discipline they show scorn and look for excuse to justify themselves afterwards."

(4) Cells were dissolved and general-body meetings substituted in their places; the qualifications for the party membership lowered; fractions in mass organisations dissolved; education and promotion of comrades coming from the toiling classes—especially from working class, agricultural labour and poor peasantry to leading positions was completely neglected. Hence utter reformists from upper classes—especially petty-bourgeoisie—filled the party committees and many who never liquidated their upperclass anti-proletarian habits wormed their way into leading positions.

(5) Because of the abovementioned state of affairs the bourgeois habits, morals, propaganda methods, financial methods, style of work, have all come to stay inside the party.

Because of the long period of reformist politics and practising of bourgeois organisational methods and style of work, the party had already become debilitated and devitalised by the time of the second party congress. The state of the organisation was suited for reformist, peaceful and open legal methods of functioning and not for illegal methods of functioning and the discharging of the revolutionary tasks posed by the second party congress. Right-reformism had completely eaten away the very vitals of the party and left the party in a moth-eaten and truncated condition.

### **Left Sectarianism Liquidates the Party**

While keeping similar situation in view which our party faced at the time of the second party congress, the Communist International gave a warning to the communist parties that "in transforming a socialist mass party into a communist party the party must not confine itself to merely concentrating authority while leaving the old order unchanged", that the centralisation "is possible of achievement only when the members at large feel this authority as a fundamentally efficient instrument in their common activity and struggle. Otherwise it will appear as bureaucracy and struggle....."

In this same connection the Communist International gave a special warning to the leadership of the communist parties thus:

"This fundamental organisational task imposes upon the leading party organs the obligation of constantly directing and exercising a systematic influence over the party work. This requires a manifold exertion on the part of those comrades who are active in leadership of their organisations of the party. Those in charge of communist activity must not only see to it that comrades—men and women—should be engaged in party work in general, they must help and direct such work systematically and with practical knowledge of the business, with a precise orientation in regard to special conditions. They must also endeavour to find out any mistake committed in their own



activities on the basis of experience, constantly improving the methods of work and not forgetting for a moment the object of the struggle" (*Principles of the Party Organisation*).

What did the new leadership, the PB (CC never met at all) elected at the second congress, do during these two years? Did it follow the directives given in the thesis of the Communist International? No. Not a jot. It had gone exactly the opposite way to the above-mentioned directives. It tried bureaucratically to carry centralisation only in the name and "to merely concentrating the authority in the hands of its central leadership while leaving the old order unchanged". It refused to "help and direct such work (practical activity of the ranks and lower committees— CC) systematically and with practical knowledge of the business, with a precise orientation in regard to special conditions," and to "endeavour to find out any mistake committed in their activities (i.e. leadership's— CC)...."

On the other hand it refused to make any selfcriticism and dubbed everybody who dared to raise any doubt as cowards, betrayers, saboteurs, etc. and brought ruin on the party. It completely lost the confidence of the ranks and lower committees, betrayed the trust reposed on it at the time of the second party congress.

Left-sectarian deviation was rampant in the majority of the present PBMs by the time of second congress itself. The PB perfected itself in that direction since then. While right-reformism in the name of not disrupting the democratic front liquidated the conception of the hegemony of the proletariat, trailed behind the bourgeoisie and sabotaged mass struggles; left-sectarianism under the plea of up-holding the conception of the hegemony of the proletariat isolated the proletariat from its allies in the democratic revolution and sabotaged and disrupted the mass struggles from the opposite end. While right-reformism sabotaged the revolutionary democratic movement by trailing behind the bourgeoisie, left-sectarianism disrupted it by running too far ahead of the movement by its adventurist calls and actions.

In the history of the Communist Party of India, left-sectarianism practised its own organisational methods in

consonance with its adventurist and dogmatist politics, though some of them might be similar to those of right reformism. Both right-reformism and left-sectarianism are bourgeois trends—in the final analysis—reflections inside the party of the social environment outside. While right reformism followed the organisational methods of a liberal-bourgeois party, i.e., of allowance for factional groups and the top leadership in power manoeuvres to keep its hold over the party machine through maintaining balance of power between different groups and practising formal democracy, left-sectarianism followed the bourgeois authoritarian methods, i.e. suppression of the opposition groups inside the party through terror though the principle of balance of power is utilised as an auxiliary to it and replacement of formal democracy through the 'iron discipline' of the automatons. These are the methods similar to those used by the fascist Tito clique inside the Yugoslav CP which were described by the communique of the information bureau thus:

"This type of organisation of the Yugoslav Communist Party cannot be described as anything but a sectarian-bureaucratic organisation. It leads to the liquidation of the party as an active, selfacting organism, it cultivates military methods of leadership in the party similar to the methods advocated in his day by Trotsky.

"It is completely intolerable state of affairs when the most elementary rights of members in the Yugoslav Communist Party are suppressed, when the slightest criticism of incorrect measures in the party is brutally repressed.

"The information bureau regards as disgraceful such actions as the expulsion from the party and the arrest of the central committee members, Comrades Djuiovic and Hebrang because they dared to criticise the anti-Soviet attitude of the leaders of the Yugoslav Communist Party, and called for friendship between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.

"The information bureau considers that such a disgraceful, purely Turkish, terrorist regime cannot be tolerated in the communist party. The interests of the very existence and development of the Yugoslav Communist Party demand that an end be put to this regime."

Left-sectarianism has not yet reached the climax as it had been in Yugoslav party, but it was well on its way and titoist methods had come to be used in our party also. If not for the timely intervention of the information bureau and the Peking conference, titoite disaster would have faced our party too.

This is proved by the fact that the general secretary saw a correction of the Peking manifesto in the editorial of the information bureau organ in one of his letters to another PBM and PB's statement of selfjustification on the editorial of the information bureau organ while making a formal acceptance of the mistakes. R. P. Dutt gave a warning as early as July 1949 about the antiparty ways of our party in a letter written to an Andhra comrade in reply to an accusation of reformism on the part of CPGB levelled by the Andhra comrade. He warned thus:

"One last point if I may make it from one who has been a friend and helper to the Indian party from its earliest days. You are at present conducting a magnificent battle which we are following with the deepest sympathy and admiration but we are a little concerned at the tendency shown at present in some documents to find fault with the majority of other CPs, to find the British party wrong, the French party wrong, the Chinese party wrong, Mao-Tse-tung wrong etc. This tendency is not a healthy one and if unchecked, could lead to the kind of outlook that has reached an extreme form in the Yugoslav party."

This letter was sent to the PB on 15th August 1949.

Before going concretely into the titoist and antiparty methods of the PB, let us see what is the main basis of these methods.

A CC of 31 and a PB of 9 were elected at the second party congress. Even though the clouds of the fascist repression were looming large and the first shocks of it had already been experienced by Andhra and Kerala before the party congress itself, neither the party congress which elected the CC nor the CC which elected the PB did actually take this important factor to consideration. Hence a big CC which was technically unwieldy and unsuited to illegal conditions was elected. In the same way a PB, which could not function as a team giving day-to-day guidance to the lower committees, was elected.

Though the talk of crisis, upsurge, revolution etc. was too loud, the whole understanding of the period and the nature of civil war which we were in, was formal, harbouring and preaching worst legalist illusions.

Another point to be noted in this connection is one of the cardinal organisational principles of the communist parties laid down in the theses of the Communist International, that no person can be a member of more than one party committee (for example, one cannot be member of CC and PC simultaneously, but one can be a member of the CC and its executive body the PB, in the same way of PC and PC secretariat) was violated in practice in the old reformist period though no such change was made in the party constitution. Not only was this not negated at the time of the party congress, but followed in the election of the CC. As a consequence not only many of the CCMs but some of the PBMs also had been members of the PCs simultaneously. Later because neither the CC nor PB was functioned, such CCMs and PBMs got themselves reduced to virtual PCMs. In case some regular and direct guidance of the CC becomes a necessity for any of the PCs, the theses of CI provide for attaching CCMs to those units. This does not mean in particular cases exemption can not be given. But the point to be noted is the exemption in course of time virtually becomes a rule to the point of CC becoming a federal body of the PCs. This principle of dual membership in the party committees is not only wrong and anomalous as a principle but it also hinders the functioning and evolution of an efficient central party leadership.

Either due to direct banning of the party or making the party virtually illegal through unleashing of white terror, the entire party faced the problem of illegal functioning. It was obvious that the CC with such a big number could not be functioned. The PB of 9 also could not discharge its functions giving daily and regular guidance to the lower units. The same problem faced the PCs and in some provinces DCs and TCs also. With this white terror and illegality forced upon the party immediately after the party congress, the entire responsibility for reorganising

the party so that it can discharge its revolutionary tasks under these illegal conditions, had fallen on to the shoulders of the PB.

As soon as illegality was forced upon the party, the PB ought to have met the CC and made it reconstitute itself into a smaller functioning CC suited to the conditions of illegality. As a matter of fact the party constitution adopted at the second party congress provides for such a contingency, though it had not been drafted keeping in view the conditions of extreme illegality.

The PB had practically done nothing in this matter but only allowed matters to drift. Not only at the time of the party congress but even after the congress the PB did not care to think seriously about the matter at all. It can be proved by the fact that during the last two years since the party congress the PB neither produced a single document on reorganisation nor a single circular on tech methods for the ranks nor demanded organisational reports from the PCs; consequently no PC, except the Andhra PC, sent any organisational reports to the PB. The PB in its one long session of about three months at the end of 1948 could find time to produce hundreds of pages on other issues (produced voluminous documents on PCJ, Acharya and others) but not a document on organisation. The PB made a pitiful attempt at the fag end to produce one, a PBM produced notes for the draft after the PB meeting was over, which was not elaborated later, but was put in cold storage.

This is not accidental. There are very deep-seated causes for it. In the days of right-reformism the party organisation was built up which was suited for peaceful work and parliamentary opposition, not for leading militant class struggles. With the advent of fascist repression after the second party congress, this reformist organisation began to crumble. The PB instead of realising the state of the party organisation and making serious efforts to adopt suitable forms of organisation, not only allowed the things to take their own course but also imposed new adventurist organisational methods on the party which helped the job of the counter-revolutionary government to smash our party. The PB imagining insurrection round the corner, goaded the party ranks and cadre to carry on virtually legalistic methods of organisation under the threat of damning them as cowards,

saboteurs, etc. on the one hand and waving the rod of discipline on the other. This enforcement of discipline as great Lenin points out, is nothing but "phrasemongering and grimacing".

The basic reasons of all these organisational bungling and antiparty methods of organisation apart from others, is due to the fact that the PB does not realise the importance of the role of organisation for the successful building of a revolutionary movement and leading the revolution to success. It has an oversimplified formula of crisis-upsurge-revolution; which in practice means in the period of crisis there must be automatic upsurge and then automatic strike struggles and revolution; no necessity of a well disciplined and steeled party and mass organisations. Hence adventurist calls for strikes, continuation of the old legalistic methods of functioning in face of white terror. To continue the same old legalistic methods of organisation and not realising the necessity of illegal methods suited to the conditions of white terror is nothing but the nonrealisation of the role of organisation and defying spontaneity from another end. Right-reformism derided spontaneous mass upsurge and sabotaged mass struggles under the plea of organisational unpreparedness. Left-sectarianism defied spontaneous upsurge and sabotaged mass struggles from the other end, without caring for building illegal organisations at all. While right-reformism counterposed organisation to mass upsurge, left-sectarianism did the reverse, producing the same vicious effects from opposite end. Let us see what Lenin had said with regard to this, when he was criticising the early social democrats who had no conception of illegal work and who played into the hands of tsarist police.

"We must now deal with the question that has undoubtedly arisen in the mind of every reader. Have these primitive methods, which are a complaint of growth affecting the whole of the movement, any connection with economism, which is only one of the tendencies in Russian social-democracy? We think that they have. The lack of practical training, the lack of ability to carry on organisational work is certainly common to us all, including those who have stood unswervingly by the point of view of revolutionary Marxism from the very outset. And of

course, no one can blame the practical workers for their lack of practical training. But the term 'primitive methods' embraces something more than mere lack of training: it means the restrictedness of revolutionary work generally, the failure to understand that a good organisation of revolutionaries cannot be built upon the basis of such restricted work, and lastly—and most important—it means the attempts to justify this restrictedness and to elevate it to a special 'theory', i.e. bowing in worship to spontaneity in this matter also. As soon as such attempts were observed, it became certain that primitive methods are connected with economism and that we shall never eliminate this restrictedness of our organisational activity until we eliminate economism generally (i.e. the narrow conception of Marxian theory, of the role of social-democracy and of its political tasks). And these attempts were revealed in a twofold direction. Some began to say: the labour masses themselves have not yet brought forward the broad and militant political tasks that the revolutionaries desire to 'impose' upon them; they must continue for the time being to fight for immediate political demands, to conduct 'the economic struggle against the employers and the government' (and naturally corresponding to this struggle which is 'easily understood' by the mass movement there must be an organisation that will be 'easily understood' by the most untrained youth). Others, far removed from 'gradualness', began to say: it is possible and necessary to 'bring about a political revolution', but this is no reason whatever for building a strong organisation of revolutionaries to train the proletariat in the steadfast and stubborn struggle. All we need do it to snatch up our old friend, the 'handy' wooden club. Speaking without metaphor it means—we must organise a general strike, or we must stimulate the spiritless progress of the labour movement by means of 'excitative terror'. Both these tendencies, the opportunist and the 'revolutionary', bow to the prevailing primitiveness; neither believes that it can be eliminated, neither understands our primary and most imperative practical task, namely to establish an organisation of revolutionaries capable of maintaining the energy, the stability and continuity of the political struggle" (*What Is To Be Done?*)

Apart from the petty-bourgeois vices, this nonrealisation of the role of organisation is at the root of the anti-party methods pursued by the PB during two years. Now let us go into the matter concretely.

(1) The CC is the highest unit inside the party subservient only to the party congress. The PB is a body elected by the CC to give regular guidance to the party units basing on the decisions of the CC and subject to the organisational discipline of the CC. The PB taking advantage of the illegal conditions has topsy-turveyed this important organisational principle of the party, virtually made the CC subservient to it. No proposal to reduce the CC and PB so as to make them effective functioning units under these conditions of illegality was put. On the other hand, while the PCs were being reorganised by the PB into smaller bodies, it did not consider the reorganisation of the CC under the plea that it is "elected by the second congress as the central leadership—organ of political unification—for leading the struggle against reformism to completion—the task is to activise it—to politically unify it" (Notes for the Draft Resolution on Organisation—by a PBM).

Let us see what efforts were made to "activise" and to "politically unify" the CC? It was suggested in casual talks at the time of the PB meeting of 1948 end, to function the CC in groups. It was attempted after the PB meeting to explain and get the three PB documents—Tactical Line, Agrarian Question and People's Democracy—accepted. Later postal functioning was attempted to get the opinions of the CCMs through circulating inner-CC documents. Even here not all the documents and letters of the CCMs and others were circulated. Only those who supported the PB's sectarian line and antiparty methods were circulated. Others were suppressed. For instance, while meticulous care was taken to circulate all the resolutions and opinions supporting the incorrect stand of the PB on the 9th March fiasco, the strong criticism of Ram (C. Rajeswara Rao) on the PB's stand and "General Secretary's Letter to Ranks", demanding a meeting of the PB and staying organisational decisions regarding the same was not circulated to CCMs (even



some PBMs were not shown till after a very long time). While the resolution on Tamil Nadu committee and a big document on people's democracy produced by a member of the TNPC secretariat and bulky "selfcritical" reports of that secretariat members running into tens of pages were circulated, the resolution of that secretariat on the failure of the 9th March railway strike was not circulated. The letter of R. P. Dutt mentioned earlier, giving a serious warning to the leadership of our party, was not circulated to some of the PBMs, not to speak of the CCMs. While Robi's (Bhowani Sen's) criticism on Andhra documents and on Ram's letters—written from time to time in which strong criticism was made regarding the politics and methods of PB—was circulated. Andhra documents and Ram's letters were not circulated. Innumerable examples of the type can be given.

Even the opinions of the CCMs on these inner-CC documents were not heeded. Circulation of inner-CC documents was resorted to mainly to gag and suppress opinion of the CCMs opposing the sectarian politics and practices of the PB, and not to "activise" and "politically unify" the CC.

The treatment of the CCMs by the PB has been against the organisational principles of the party. The general secretary gave an ultimatum to a Bombay CCM either to accept the adventurist line of the PB on jail struggles or be prepared for disciplinary action. He asks one of the CCMs at Yeravda jail to keep a watch over a PBM, simply because he happened to violently disagree with the PB on jail and TU tactics. CCMs were bureaucratically removed from the CC by the PB, for example a Tamil Nadu CCM, a Bengal CCM, etc. The PB has the right to take a precautionary measure for ensuring the safety of the party, but has no right to remove a CCM outright from the CC.

This way one CCM after another was badgered into submission and the CC, the highest authority of the party between two all-India party congresses, had been reduced to the position of subservience to the PB.

The main propounders of the left-sectarian line—B.T. Ranadive and Bhowani Sen—who had virtually usurped the entire functioning of the PB, resorted to above methods, i.e. avoiding

a CC meeting and badgering the CCMs to submission one after another, because they were not sure of a majority in the CC for their left-sectarian adventurist line. Hence if a CC meeting had at all to be convened, to ensure the acceptance of the left-adventurist line of the PB, the majority of the CCMs had to be badgered into toeing the line of the PB in advance. Bhowani Sen made a frank admission of this before the CC meeting in course of his speech on his selfcritical report.

Thus the highest party unit inside the CPI had been disabled, the collective effort of the CC members to pool their experience and to put their heads together and grapple with the serious problems facing the party had been obstructed and the party as a whole had been deprived of the collective leadership of the CC.

(2) The PB also did not function as a team. Out of nine PBMs, 5 remain stuck up with the PCs and one in jail and even the rest of the PBMs did not function together. During these two years the full PB meeting was held only once. The normal method has been the general secretary consulting with whichever PBM he wanted to and carry on the later get the decisions okayed by the other PBMs. Immediately after the party congress when the general secretary was at the old town (Bombay) he used to consult the other PBM of that place (G. Adhikari), later after the Tactical Line i.e. the whole of 1949 it had become a two-man show of the general secretary and Bhowani Sen; later after the editorial of the information bureau organ and other documents of the Soviet writers on India began to come and Bhowani Sen began to take a firm stand against Ranadive, it became a one-man show. Even documents like Balabushevich's article on India were not circulated to the other PBMs for months together.

Along with this, another important point has to be noted. Everybody in the CC and PB except Ranadive and Bhowani Sen were charged with one or more of the following crimes—reformism, cowardice, betrayal and sabotage—at one time or the other. Only two of the entire party leadership 'stood out' as real Marxist and consistent revolutionaries.

No proper unit functioning and assignment of functions to individual PBMs were there. The rule of the messiah had come to stay. Whatever came out from the mouth and pen of the general secretary became Marxism. He became so much selfconceited that he began to produce big documents on every subject even without serious study.

The logic of left-sectarian politics and organisational methods reached a climax in this matter.

However this does not mean that for all the antiparty methods of the PB none except the general secretary is responsible. It means other individual PBMs have to bear the responsibility in varying degrees, which will be concretely assessed in the individual selfcritical reports, and the general secretary has to bear the main responsibility and Bhowani Sen comes next to him.

(3) The principle of criticism and self-criticism was applied by the PB to everybody except itself. Certain members of the PB had become conceited against which Stalin had warned: "This danger (i.e. leaders separating themselves from the masses—cc) may result in the leaders becoming conceited and regarding themselves as infallible. And what good is it if the top leadership grows conceited and begins to look down on the masses? It is clear that nothing but disaster can come of this for the party" (15 July 1948, *Lasting Peace*—A. Pauker's article on the CP of Yugoslavia). The PB instead of going into its Himalayan blunders self-critically and correcting itself, threw the entire blame for the fiascos committed by itself upon the lower committees and ranks. It refused to learn from the opinions, doubts, etc., sometimes raised from the wrong end even.

With utter contempt for the cadre and the masses and self-conceit, it disregarded them. On the other hand, charging them with reformism, cowardice, betrayal, etc. and threatening them with the rod of discipline, it intimidated them and extracted confessions which ran into hundreds of pages. Out of the inner-party material produced by the PB during these two years, this type of material consisting of nauseating and self-effacing stories

of "My Mistakes" (this does not mean all the comrades who gave self-critical documents are right or all the charges of the PB on them are wrong, the purpose here is to lay bare the antiparty methods of the PB, of suppressing innerparty democracy) is a major part of the total material.

Taking advantage of the illegal condition of the party, those of the CCMs, PCMs and some others who differed with the PB line on some point or other were kept away from the field of their work— completely 'denified' for months together, thus shattering their resistance through complete isolation. Some of the CCMs who dared to differ with the left-sectarian line of the PB were denied the right of getting inner-CC documents, even before any formal disciplinary action was taken against such a CCM, keeping him completely in the dark as to the happenings inside the CC and PB.

The PB thus adopting anti-party titoist methods and misusing the innerparty weapon of criticism and selfcriticism, suppressed all innerparty democracy, the rights of party members and healthy discussions.

The PB not only did not start an inner-party forum for carrying on discussions on political and other issues facing the movement, but also suppressed some of the important articles of Chinese communist leaders—Mao's article on people's democratic dictatorship was not published in the English organ, Liu Shao-chi's speech at the Peking conference was also not published—and erected a wall between them and the party-ranks. The PB tried to reduce the party ranks to the position of obedient and blind order-carriers.

To give but a few examples to illustrate what has been mentioned above:

(a) The three documents of the PB—tactical line, agrarian question, people's democracy—suppressed all genuine doubts and suggestions about the party line from ranks and lower committees and a consistent left-sectarian line was worked out.

(b) The letter of the general secretary to ranks, charging everybody who raised doubts about the propriety of the decision

of 9th March railway strike with reformism, cowardice, betrayal, etc., suppressing all criticism against the PB. It must be noted that immediately after the fiasco, a good section of the party ranks and the party committees held the view that the decision of 9th March was wrong. It was only after this letter was sent and all criticism suppressed and after some of the party committees which opposed the strike decision dealt very severely, that the thing was silenced.

(c) The first statement of the PB on the editorial of the organ of the information bureau, given in justification of its old sectarian line, which was rightly condemned by the entire party as a piece of selfjustification and later accepted by the PB itself as such.

(d) The treatment meted out to the PCs was no better. In the days of reformism the then PB under the leadership of renegade Joshi used to keep the PCs in check by balancing between individuals and groups if any. The present PB under the leadership of Ranadive set itself the task of not only balancing between individuals and groups to push through its sectarian politics but also to disrupt the PCs. The PB dissolved some of them and "reorganised" them with those whom the PB considered fit to push through its antiparty line and methods. This does not mean that all the "reorganised" PCs or all the members whom the PB had taken in fulfilled its expectations.

The case of Tamil Nadu PC secretariat is the best example in this matter. The members of the Tamil Nadu PC secretariat were called, individually badgered into submission with the help of the PBM from Tamil Nadu (N.K.Krishnar) and after that only those in whom the PB had confidence of fully kowtowing to the PB line were taken in. The rest were kept outside their own province.

The case of Andhra secretariat needs special mention. It had been consistently fighting for a correct line not only since the second party congress but even before that and had been criticising the PB's wrong politics, directives and organisational practices from time to time. Hence the PB could not tolerate

such a committee. At first it tried to find out some weak spots inside it and disrupt it. Having failed in it, the two big men of the PB, Ranadive and Bhowani Sen, decided on their own to separate the Hyderabad state committee from the Andhra PC and established direct contact with the Hyderabad city committee which had been moving on a factional line refusing to accept the line of armed struggle of the PC and carrying its old reformist line under the cover of left-sectarian phrases of the PB. Of course the state committee refused to fall in line with this line of the PB. An attempt to set up the Andhra student fraction against the PC secretariat was also made. Many more other pinpricks need not be mentioned here. All this was at a time when the enemy had concentrated tens of thousands of armed forces in Telangana and Madras part of the Andhra to wipe out our revolutionary liberation movement and the Andhra PC was leading the Telangana struggle and extending it to ever new areas against all odds. These factional attempts at disruption of the movement were carried on without intimating a word to the Andhra PBM and without the least consideration for the movement. For a selfconceited petty-bourgeois individualist, the movement does not matter; it is sufficient if his ego is satisfied. The PB had prepared everything to suppress the PC secretariat, even circulated to CCMs an adverse note written by Bhowani Sen on the Andhra documents without circulating the documents themselves. Meanwhile the editorial of the organ of the information bureau appeared and saved the situation. Otherwise nobody can say what further damage would have been done to the Telangana and Andhra armed struggle and the liberation movement of India as a whole.

Other PCs, though they were not as bold as the Andhra PC to come out against the left-sectarian line of the PB, they too began raising doubts from their practical experiences. Hence the PB had lost confidence that it could convince the PCs and adopted an organisational trick. It violated an important organisational principle of communist parties and the very constitution of the CPI adopted at the second congress that, "the fraction is completely controlled by the corresponding party committee"

though not in words but in practice, and attempted to make the fractions of mass organisations virtually independent of the respective party committees and reduce the PCs and other committees to the status of post-offices of the PB. In this connection another relevant point needs to be mentioned. The general secretary while threatening the UP PC secretariat for not translating and duplicating the bulky documents—including hundreds of pages so-called selfcritical reports, declared that it is the only PC which fails to translate and duplicate for the ranks hundreds of pages of the stuff produced by the PB and has no right to exist as a PC.

Now coming to the point, the PB began its experiment with the student front which came in handy. A call for building a strong AISF fraction for giving “firm centralised guidance” to the student fractions and cells was given in the “PB Note on ‘Student Struggles’”.

(1) The immediate task before the fraction is to coordinate the activity of the AISF under firm centralised guidance, (2) for this purpose to ideologically unify first the leadership over all the provinces by constantly checking that all the units are implementing the accepted party line, (3) by constantly guiding them and being in live contact with the developing struggles, (4a) raising its own and the ideological level of the provincial and district leaders on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, (4b) centralise and unify the movement by ruthlessly fighting all treachery and sabotage, all manifestations of reformism and ruthlessly ejecting from positions all those guilty of hardened reformism, or who neglect Marxist study. (5) to lay down the task of the all- India movement and the tasks of each province, to decisive help in giving a bold lead to the student struggles, to raise them to higher level and make them an integral part of the struggle for people’s democratic revolution led by the party, (6a) to give up all reformist organisational methods, study and adopt accepted revolutionary forms of organisation of the movement, (6b) to study from the masses new forms of resistance and develop them...”

These are the tasks given to the AISF fraction. Whether any tasks given to the PCs? None at all! While meticulous care was

taken to write out such a small detail that “no member of the provincial fraction to be removed from the student front without the consent of the AISF fraction” and “organisational work of the provincial fraction—formation of district fraction, district functioning to be closely checked by the AISF fraction”, no directive was given to the PCs. The meaning is obvious.

The note of the PB asks the AISF fraction to “draw a list of say 100 students in the country—including all top leaders of the fraction and these will be put through a correspondent course(!)”.

The AISF fraction tries to put this directive of post-box schools into practice. Nothing happened in spite of repeated reminders and calls. Can the organisational bankruptcy of the PB go any further?

Suppose if all the other all-India fractions also are put on the same rails as the AISF, what is to be the job of the PCs except acting as post-offices of PB and its all-India fractions? Obviously if this was not checked in course of time the PCs would have been reduced to the status of post-offices. Incidentally this can be compared with the big bourgeoisie attempting to reduce the provincial governments to the status of municipalities. The PB starting from disrupting, suppressing and “reorganising” the PCs, ended in making them into post-offices.

(5) The PB practised favouritism and introduced double-standard of treatment of comrades inside the party. To give a few instances, an important tech comrade was involved in a certain manipulation of accounts. A central committee member was also in the same den and when the tech comrade asked his advice, he acquiesced in the matter. While action against the tech comrade was taken and the thing was circulated to the PCs in a long document, the CCM concerned was not even censured.

A certain PBM of Yeravda was singled out for attack, because he refused to submit to the browbeating of the PB and opposed, in his own way, the tactics of the PB on TU and jail issues, though other CCMs have not done his “crimes” in the eyes of the PB. Not only that, the general secretary wrote to another CCM in the jail to keep watch over him.



(6) The left-sectarian PB began to speak everything in the name of working class and the toiling masses and began to dub comrades coming from other classes, if they raise any doubts about the sectarian line and tactics of the PB, as petty-bourgeois funks or kulak-small-nation chauvinists etc. While right-reformists brought in class discrimination stealthily inside the party and did nothing to educate and promote proletarian-cadre, the left-sectarianism brought on class discrimination from the other end under the cover of revolutionary slogans like "proletarianise the party". Though certain comrades coming from proletariat and other toiling classes were promoted to leading positions, nothing was done to educate them. On the other hand their worst sentiments were roused against the comrades coming from the other classes. In the matter of jail struggles the issue of classification was made an issue of petty-bourgeois vs proletariat and peasants, simply because most of the comrades coming from petty-bourgeois class were put in class I and others in class II and some comrades coming from the petty-bourgeoisie had treated comrades from toiling classes badly and cared more for their petty facilities than for the unity and honour of our party. In the end when it was found that the demand for abolition of classification could not be won in the Bombay jails, the general secretary even suggested to a CCM in Yeravda jail, that we might have to discard class I on our own. This has nothing to do with the ideology of the proletariat, but equalitarianism of a petty-bourgeois-anarchist who does not know how to fight the social system based on inequality. Because of the wrong twist given to the revolutionary slogan of proletarianising the party, making the issue of classification in jails an issue of petty-bourgeois vs proletariat and peasants etc., a gulf is being created between comrades coming from the working-class and peasantry and comrades coming from petty-bourgeois and other classes. This has expressed itself in its crassest form in Bengal where the party is very seriously faced with this problem.

(7) Because of continuing the old legalistic methods of functioning in face of white terror, adopting methods of slave-driving the cadre and party ranks into adventurist actions under

the threat of disciplinary action, resulted in the loss of huge number of cadres and left the party in a state of liquidation without either proper illegal tech apparatus or functioning cells and other units.

(8) The self-conceit of the PB—mainly the general secretary—is not confined to the boundaries of India. Under the apparently revolutionary slogan of “We must state emphatically that the CPI has accepted Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin as authoritative sources of Marxism. It has not discovered new sources of Marxism beyond these” (Tactical Line), the PB under the leadership of the general secretary had been pursuing a bourgeois-nationalist anti-international masked-titoite policy. It proceeded with titoite arrogance not only to refuse to learn from the rich revolutionary experiences of brother parties but also to slander them and their leaders as reformists and ventured to ‘correct’ them. By this it sought to drive a wedge between the international communist movement and the CPI.

It pitted Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin against Mao. Not satisfied with that, it bracketed Mao with the arch-enemies of the proletariat and renegades like Tito, Browder, etc., and brought grist to the mill of imperialists and their lackeys who were spreading slander against Mao as eastern Tito and made the leadership of the CPI a butt of ridicule in the eyes of the world progressive forces and communist fraternity.

The slander campaign against the CPGB and its leader, Palme Dutt, who had been helping our party since its inception, reached its worst. A systematic gossip-mongering had been carried on by some PBMs and CCMs among middle cadres, through whom it had reached the ranks, that the CPGB is utter reformist and it has misled the CPI several times into the reformist mire as if the CPI would have achieved its object but for this “intervention” on the part of the CPGB. This slander campaign reached its zenith with a pamphlet published by the People’s Publishing House, under the instructions of the general secretary, containing the correspondence between the Australian Communist party and the CPGB. This pamphlet contains an arrogant introduction the

essence of which is that the leadership of the CPGB is refusing self-criticism while pursuing a reformist policy.

The CPGB in the beginning sent us some of their leaders who taught us elementary Marxism and communist trade-union work, and since then has been regularly helping us with political guidance. Palme Dutt, in spite of his preoccupation with the problems of Great Britain and its party, has been taking special interest on the problems of India and the CPI, and teaching us to apply Marxism to Indian conditions through his books on India.

A series of editions of Palme Dutt's book *India Today* is the only authoritative book till today on Indian national-liberation movement, on which the party ranks and leadership are being educated. The leadership of the CPI could do the least in this direction. Whatever it has done is arrant nonsense, for example, *Agrarian Question* by the PB. At times political differences might have arisen between the CPGB and the CPI. But it is sheer foolishness to embark upon this type of slander campaign without waiting to look back how on so many critical occasions the CPGB and Palme Dutt had corrected us—the Three Party Letter of 1933, Dutt-Bradley Thesis of 1936, CPGB's letters of 1941 after Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union, Palme Dutt's criticism regarding our wrong stand with regard to the Muslim League and finally his letter of warning to an Andhra comrade in 1949.

By its slander campaign against the CPGB and Palme Dutt, the PB has done great harm to the cause of Indian revolution. It has helped objectively the British imperialists, the common enemy of both, by driving a wedge between the British working class and Indian masses. It is indispensable for the revolutionary movement of India that closest possible ties are forged between the CPGB and the CPI and fraternal political help is secured from the CPGB and specially from Palme Dutt.

In the same way gossip-mongering had been carried on against other brother parties and their leaders.

It is really a pity that a comrade like Adhikari who has been a member of our central committee since its inception had also fallen a victim to such gossip-mongering started by the general

secretary. Adhikari, in his self-critical report has made a frank admission in this regard:

“The masked titoite trend expressed itself in a specific theory, which was never put down on paper up to that time but was widely gossiped among PBMs and certain CCMs as well and also among leading cadres since the party congress. The postulates of this thesis were as follows:

“(a) After the end of the second world war there was a recrudescence of revisionism in a number of important communist parties of the world (as at the end of the first world war) which expressed itself in the repudiation of the dictatorship of the proletariat (statements of Thorez, Gottwald, Dimitrov, Pollitt, etc. of 1947 were hinted at).

“(b) Inside the CPI such a trend of course dominated up to the end of 1947. But from 1947 ‘Marxist-Leninist’ trend inside the CPI took up the fight against the right-reformist revisionist’ trend vanquished it at the second congress. This ‘Marxist-Leninist’ trend had achieved this victory and had come to the ‘correct’ Marxist-Leninist line for the new stage of the Indian revolution almost on its own without any direct help of the leadership of the international communist movement and almost simultaneously with the inaugural meeting of the information bureau.

“(c) We accept the authority of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and the CPSU (B) and none else.

“These were the postulates of a theory which was being popularised among leading comrades since the second party congress in private gossip. A systematic slander of the leaders of the important communist parties of Europe, and of Mao—by indirect innuendoes and suggestions was a feature of the gossip in the central dens since the end of the party congress right from the second congress to the middle of 1949 and later. Ranadive is the originator and proponent of this theory and used to initiate such gossip. I became a supporter of this theory under Ranadive’s influence already in the days when I was making the turn from my utter right-reformism, and from my conciliation to Joshism. I also used to participate in this slanderous gossip.”

Later the general secretary advanced a step further and produced an article called "Revisionism", criticised the other brother parties who had carried on heroic fight against fascism during the second world war and rallying crores of people against anglo-American imperialist domination—some parties indirectly and some others directly—assuming the pose of Lenin to save the world communist movement from reformism, and throwing the very principle regarding the fraternal relations between communist parties to winds, not to speak of anti-Marxist politics pursued by the PB. Curiously enough no PBM objected to this atrocious article; some of them even approved it as a great Marxist contribution.

See the Choicest piece of that atrocious article:

"Revisionist tendencies, however, once more began to appear, often to an alarming degree, in a number of parties. The end of the anti-fascist war saw the accumulated effect of the gradual accretion of revisionist influence. In a number of parties, some leaders took up an openly revisionist attitude, repudiating the central propositions of Marxism-Leninism, under the guise of seeking new 'national' forms of preaching socialism. Thus leaders of a number of parties in Europe made statements about the dictatorship of the proletariat not being necessary, being an outmoded conception..."

This bourgeois-nationalist anti-international line of the PB had landed it in suppressing international documents and distortion of the very teachings of our great teachers, behind whom the PB tried to hide its ugly head to attack and slander other brother parties and their leaders. This proves that the PB's slogan of not recognising anybody except Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin is not merely an attempt at reducing the living Marxism to a dogma but also a cover to carry on its anti-Marxist politics.

The PB starting from censoring the articles of the Chinese Communist Party leaders, ended in censoring the information bureau itself (not publishing of "People's Democratic Dictatorship" of Mao, Liu Shao-chi's article on "Internationalism and Nationalism" and his speech at the Peking conference

which were published in the organ of the information bureau) and delaying the publication of Peking manifesto, editorial of the organ of the information bureau etc. while at the same time publishing Stalin's speech at the University of the Toilers of the East with a misleading note in justification of the left-sectarian line of the PB.

The distortion of Zhdanov's report to the nine parties' conference in the PB's document of "People's Democracy" written in 1948, is another glaring example apart from the one mentioned above in relation to the publication of Stalin's speech to the University of the Toilers of the East in the English weekly with a misleading introductory note. Quotations regarding post-war international situation and people's democracy were taken and outright distortion was made to suit the sectarian line of the PB. Quotations from Lenin, were given to prove that capitalist relations have become dominant in agriculture in India, in the document on "Agrarian Question". To give long quotations from classics and to distort them had become a common practice during the last two years.

Suppression of the reports and resolution of the seventh congress of the CI and Stalin's teachings regarding colonial revolutions—especially Chinese revolution—was also done because they would not suit the left-sectarian line of the PB.

The bourgeois-nationalist anti-international attitude and suppression and distortion of the teachings of our great teachers is not a particular feature of the left-sectarian period alone. It is a long-standing disease with the leadership of our party. Recollect how in the days of reformism the then PB under the leadership of Joshi took a bourgeois-nationalist attitude towards the problem of war on Soviet Union, the fatherland of the world proletariat, and how the war was characterised as an imperialist war even after Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union, how references to the reactionary nature of Gandhism were deleted unscrupulously from Stalin's 16th party congress report. Here is a passage from Adhikari's outspoken self-critical report:

"(a) I wrote articles extolling the progressive role of Gandhism in the *National Front*—"Heritage We Carry Forward" (1938); "Gandhism—A Review" (1940).

“(b) In the PB of 1936 I was party to the line of R. D. Bharadwaj’s article in *Congress Socialist* which took a bourgeois-nationalist stand on the question of our attitude on contingency of a fascist attack on the USSR.

“(c) After the fascist attack on the USSR in June 1941 I initiated in the then PB the bourgeois-nationalist line of continuing to regard the war as an imperialist war and resisted any change despite hints from Deoli jail sent by Ranadive, until their full document reached us simultaneously with CPGB documents in November end 1941.

“(d) In the war period, as has been pointed out I was the initiator of the rabid bourgeois-nationalist deviation in applying Lenin-Stalin teachings to the question of Pakistan and national question in India— I together with the old PB (1945-46) disregarded the clear hint against our wrong line contained in Dyakov’s article and joined with Ranadive in writing a letter to Dange then in London, asking him to write to *New Times* not to publish such articles or something of that sort.

“(e) In the same period I was guilty of deleting from Stalin’s 16th party congress report a reference to Gandhi—which has been condemned in the second congress selfcritical report. It showed how low I had sunk in the period of right-reformist-grovelling before bourgeois-nationalist leader and repudiating the great leader of the international workers’ movement—leader of all progressive humanity.”

This long-standing disease of bourgeois-nationalist anti-international attitude which is common to both reformism and sectarianism has corroded our party very deeply. A conscious, uncompromising and steadfast struggle has to be waged against this disease if our party has to get rid of it once for all.

(9) The PB’s titoist methods finally landed the general secretary in the distorting of the history of our party, in spite of the international documents regarding the same. We cannot go into all the details of the twisting of the history of the party. We will go into one salient point as an example. The general secretary in his document “PB Note on Tamilnadu” dated 18 August 1949, regarding the period 1930-34 of our party history writes thus:

“In Bombay left-congressism was given up and the proletariat entered into a fight against the bourgeois political movement—in 1930. There were sectarian mistakes in approach etc. but basically it was correct to expose and unmask. The bourgeoisie threw itself against the new force with all its full force and resources, temporarily isolated the communists from the working class itself—yet communist cadres were born and within a couple of years all lost ground recovered. So quick was recovery that Gandhi’s meeting in 1931 could be captured.

“Yet the petty-bourgeois congressism decried this as sectarian and made it a cardinal principle to repudiate this past, this formation of proletarian party—foundation of Joshism. In this they primarily based themselves on the vacillating class petty-bourgeoisie which was equated with the people.”

Here we are not concerned about the evaluation of that period by Joshian reformism. We are interested in only showing how the evaluation of the general secretary of that period is in contradiction with that of the documents of the Communist International.

If it is only a question of “sectarian mistakes in approach etc. but basically correct...” why the three parties—Chinese, German and British CPs—had to address an open letter to Indian communist in 1933? Why the seventh congress of the CI had to make a special mention of the sectarian mistakes of the CPI in Wang Ming’s report on colonial liberation movements? Compare the above para with what is written in Wang Ming report:

“Our comrades in India have suffered for a long time from ‘left’-sectarian errors: they did not participate in all the mass demonstrations organised by the National Congress or organisations affiliated with it. At the same time, the Indian communist did not possess sufficient forces independently to organise a really powerful mass anti-imperialist movement. Therefore the Indian communists until very recently were to a considerable extent isolated from the mass of the people, from the mass anti-imperialist struggle. The toiling masses of India could not be convinced of the fact that the communists not only



really desire to struggle themselves, but can also lead the millions in a struggle against the principal mortal enemy of the Indian people—British imperialism. In this connection for a long time the small, scattered groups of communists could not become a united, mass all-Indian communist party. By their sectarian policy and isolation from the mass anti-imperialist movement, these small communist groups objectively helped to retain the influence of Gandhism and national reformism over the masses. It was only recently that the all-Indian Communist Party, which has already taken shape, began to rid itself of its sectarian errors and made the first steps towards the creation of an anti-imperialist united front. Nevertheless, our young Indian comrades, having taken this road, showed a great lack of understanding of the united front tactics. This may be borne out even by the fact that our Indian comrades in attempting to establish a united anti-imperialist front with the National Congress in December of last year put before the latter such demands as ‘the establishment of an Indian Workers’ and Peasants’ Soviet Republic’, ‘confiscation of all lands belonging to the zamindars (landowners) without compensation’, ‘a general strike as the only effective programme of action’, etc. Such demands on the part of our Indian comrades can serve as an example of how not to carry on the tactics of the anti-imperialist, united front...

“In the interest of the further successful struggle against British imperialism, the Indian communists must put a decisive stop to sectarianism and must actively participate in the mass anti-imperialist movement. The Indian communists should in no case disregard work within the National Congress and the national-revolutionary and national-reformist organisations affiliated with it, maintaining at the same time their complete political and organisational independence. Both within and without the National Congress the Indian communists must consolidate all the genuine anti-imperialist forces of the country, broadening and leading the struggle of the masses against the imperialist oppressors.”

In this connection one fact needs special mention. The PB in its various documents has time and again made reference to the

thesis and programme of the sixth congress of the Communist International. It is good that it has done so and nobody can find anything wrong in it. But how is it that in course of its two and a half years' of functioning the PB did hardly refer to the valuable reports and resolutions of the seventh congress of the Communist International? While the PB got the thesis and the programme of the sixth congress printed and circulated to the ranks, and rightly so, how is it that it did not think it necessary to get the various reports and resolutions of the seventh congress printed and circulated?

Such withholding of the seventh congress reports etc. from the ranks can only be explained by the fact that the seventh congress dealt a mortal blow to the left-sectarianism in a thoroughgoing manner and the left-sectarian PB did not think it to the advantage of the line it pursued to popularise the precious documents of the historic seventh congress of the Communist International.

(10) While the attitude of the PB and mainly of the general secretary towards the world communist parties is hostile, what is his attitude to renegades and spies? See the tone of the general secretary's statement on the resolution of the information bureau on Yugoslav CP! While the resolutions of the information bureau, and the resolutions of the other communist parties unequivocally condemn the renegades of the leadership of the Yugoslav CP, the general secretary praises the past "heroic role" of those enemies of the working class and spies of the imperialists. The whole tone of the statement is that of persuasion of a misguided revolutionary, and not condemnation in sharp terms of a renegade who deserted the camp of socialism to that of imperialists.

With the "great shock" he had got with the defection of the Yugoslav renegade, he appeals thus:

"The leaders of the Yugoslav Communist Party, regarded as the fighting symbol of a people taking rapid strides to socialism, drew respect and admiration from communists in all countries.

"In our country, our party had consistently broadcast the story of the heroic fight and achievements of the Yugoslav people. At the second congress of our party the delegates from Yugoslavia

who attended the session drew a tumultuous applause, next only to that given to the Soviet Union.”

It is true that the general secretary supported the stand of the information bureau, but it loses its meaning in the background of the tone of persuasion. Most of the comrades felt this statement to be bad at that time, but those who dared to express against it got a kick.

This same liberal attitude to the Yugoslav renegades continued even after. The present editor of the central legal organ continued to be representative of the Yugoslav renegade Tanjug news agency long after Yugoslavia was thrown out of the information bureau. It was only after the intervention from abroad that the thing was stopped and open declaration to that effect made in our legal organ.

While neither the information bureau nor the other brother CPs cared to publish the rag of the reply of Yugoslav leadership to the resolution of the information bureau, PHQ in Bombay duplicated that reply and circulated to the ranks while the general secretary was at Bombay at that time. The PB was so blind to this that it had to be reminded of this by the ranks after the editorial of the information bureau.

Full one year after the information bureau's resolution one of the PHQ staff at Bombay had a talk with two members of the Yugoslav trade delegation somewhere outside and later when one of them visited the PHQ at Bombay attempts were made to win him over instead of showing him the door. The general secretary knowing this neither proposed any action nor reported it to the PB, till somebody brought the matter up.

The general secretary is personally responsible for all the above because he was in charge of the PHQ at Bombay.

Even after the open warning of the information bureau about the activities of the Yugoslav spies in India, nothing was done. No serious note of the warning was taken by the PB.

It has now come to light that the Yugoslav renegades who attended our second party congress played a significant part in the amending of our political thesis further in the direction of sectarianism. The renegade Kardelj's book *Problems of*

*International Development* was printed and widely circulated as an authoritative book on post-war international situation. It is very strange that not one CCM has raised this matter and demanded self-criticism after the information bureau's resolution on Yugoslav renegades was published. This shows to what extent bourgeois-nationalism had corroded the party.

### **Individual Responsibility of the PBMs**

The PB as a whole is responsible for the abovestated crimes. But this does not mean either that every member of the PB is responsible for all of them or in the same degree taking each crime singly. The members of the PB are responsible for different crimes in different degrees.

A polit bureau of nine comrades was elected at the time of the second congress by the central committee.

B.T. Ranadive is responsible for all the abovestated crimes, not only in the political sense of the term as the initiator, executor and dogged defender of the trotskyite-titoite type of left-sectarian political line which is the basis for those titoite methods of organisation, but also in the practical sense of the term as the initiator and executor of those crimes.

Bhowani Sen, though not the initiator of those crimes, is one of the abettors of Ranadive in his left-sectarian line and titoite methods of organisation. He is not personally responsible for all those crimes. But his responsibility as the chief abettor in the suppression of the CC and badgering of the CCMs into submission, non-functioning of the PB, suppression and disruption of the PCs has to be specially noted. He is not personally responsible for suppression of the international documents, incidents in the Bombay PHQ like circulation of Yugoslav renegades' slanderous reply to the information bureau's resolution etc., distortion of party history, favouritism and double standards.

G. Adhikari is also one of the abettors of Ranadive in his left-sectarian line and titoite organisational methods. He is not personally responsible for the suppression of the CC, non-functioning of the PB, suppression and disruption of the PCs, favouritism and double standards. But he bears the main

responsibility in aiding Ranadive in suppressing the international documents and the distortion of the teachings of our great teachers and party history.

Somnath Lahiri, from a reformist outlook, had in the beginning, doubts about the tactical line. This was realised by the general secretary and Bhowani Sen who considered him an utter reformist not to be relied upon to push through the left-sectarian line and titoite methods of the two leaders of the PB (Bhowani Sen and the general secretary). This is accepted by Bhowani Sen in his speech on his self-critical report. It was for this reason that he was virtually reduced by the PB to the position of a PC member and there too to take the responsibility of technical-organisational matters only, like tech and special. Under the circumstances he had not much to do with the functioning of the PB and with its methods. But gradually he began to grow into an ardent convert to the left-sectarian line, in cases going even to more extremes than some others viz his stand on Sarat Bose election, on the April shootings in Calcutta, in his suggestions for adventurist actions against the police, etc. However he lacked both the conceit and the conviction (for the left-sectarian line) which the PB leaders possessed and, as late as July 1949, had offered to resign from the PB.

It is not possible here to assess in full his responsibilities in relation to his work in the PC. But it is clear that though he was not put in the PC to give political guidance (that was Bhowani Sen's job) yet, as a member of the PB attached to the PC, he is politically responsible for the crass adventurist policy of the PC. He is also responsible for the anti-party organisational methods practised by the PC, some of which he put into practice himself and some of which he acquiesced in. The only extenuating factor is that he was to some extent a victim of the PB leaders and in that sense had to force himself to quickly conform to the PB's line and methods. However he continued to be looked-upon with suspicion by Ranadive and more victimisation was in store for him—as is shown by the extraction by the general secretary of bogus confessions from N.K.Krishnan alleging Lahiri's factional 'conspiracies' at the time of the second party congress. This

extracted allegation against Lahiri was kept hidden away by the general secretary obviously to be used against Lahiri at the next opportunity.

N.K.Krishnan also has been a virtual PCM for the last two years except for brief periods when he was at the centre. Hence he had not much to do with the titoite methods of the PB, except for the anti-international attitude and slandermongering against the international parties and their leaders which he admitted in this speech on his self-criticism. But he wobbled on the issue of 9th March, took an opportunist stand with regard to the PB's resolution dissolving the Tamil Nadu PC secretariat and acted as the main instrument of the PB in liquidating the party and the mass movement in Tamil Nadu by using titoite-turkish methods. The details could be got in his self-critical report.

C. Rajeswara Rao also functioned as a virtual PCM except for the brief period at the time of the PB meeting which took place at the end of 1948. He is not responsible for any of the abovementioned crimes of the PB, except for making an opportunist surrender in accepting the three PB documents, which gave the PB a green signal to embark upon adventurist tactics on all fronts. But within a couple of months after his going to his province, he raised controversy on almost all the main points of the PB documents and has been continuously writing on them basing both on the experience of the mass movement and the international documents. He, supported by PC secretariat, had been opposing vigorously the titoist organisational methods of the PB, in the matter of suppressing and liquidating provincial committees, intimidating the ranks by labelling them as 'cowards', 'betrayers' etc. and brandishing against them the rod of discipline. He wrote a letter on the issue of 9th March debacle, in which the self-justificatory and abusive letter of the general secretary to the ranks on it was severely condemned, all disciplinary actions—particularly re: Tamil Nadu PC secretariat—were demanded to be stopped, and an immediate PB meeting was demanded. Later he refused to be cowed down in spite of all the PCs—including Tamil Nadu PC secretariat—falling in line with the PB's sectarian

line on this issue. All his letters to the PB were suppressed and were not circulated to the CCMs and even to some of the PBMs.

He and the Andhra secretariat, while conducting Telangana armed struggle and extending it to newer and newer areas, had been unified and prepared the party in Andhra to a final showdown against the trotskyite political line and titoite methods of the PB. All these details can be seen in his self-critical report.

With regard to the other three PBMs who are or were in jail, another PB member from Andhra, Chandram, had been one of the votaries of the first Andhra document 1948 in which all the fundamental issues on the strategy and tactics were raised. Immediately after the document was drafted, he was caught and sent to prison. Even from the jail, with the meagre material at this disposal, he has been opposing the left-sectarian politics and titoite methods of the PB. He has no part in any of the crimes of the PB.

Another PBM, A. K. Ghosh, had also not opposed the sectarian analysis regarding the state and strategy of the revolution and wrong prospective of the PB regarding the growth of our revolution. He had opposed the titoist methods of the PB. He opposed the trade-union tactics of the PB as adventurist. He wrote out a critical note on this issue, which was suppressed by the general secretary and was not circulated to CCMs. He submitted his resignation of the membership of the PB and jail committee protesting against the anti-party methods of the PB in the matter of jail struggles in Bombay presidency. He is victim of the PBs titoite methods.

Another PBM, S. S. Yusuf, was inside jail during the last two years and has nothing to do with the titoite methods of the PB. Because he has not written anything to the PB, nothing is definitely known about his political views.

### **PB after the Editorial of the Information Bureau's Organ**

After the editorial of the information bureau organ Peking manifesto and Liu Shao-chi's speech at the Peking conference, and the documents of the comrades of the CPSU (B) even, the PB as a whole—with a few exceptions—remained sunk deep in left-sectarianism, refused to see that it had committed fundamental

left-sectarian mistakes, had brought the party to the verge of destruction by left-sectarian line and titoist methods and have even gone to the extent of not only slandering brother parties and their leaders but also distorting the teachings of Lenin and Stalin. The most "atrocious" thing was that B. T. Ranadive "discovered" in the Peking manifesto "an atrocious formulation" in calling upon the working class to rally the national bourgeoisie (i.e. the middle bourgeoisie—CC) and saw a correction of it in the editorial of the information bureau organ. Rajeswara Rao who had been fighting against the left-sectarian line of the PB and for a correct line did not come to the party centre by that time. Bhowani Sen was the only PBM among those at the centre at that time who first saw—though vaguely and not with deep understanding—that the PB's line was fundamentally wrong. He was the comrade among those at the centre who first brought to the notice of the PB the seriousness of the situation and tried his best to make sense to the other PBMs at the centre. The rest of the PBMs—Adhikari, Lahiri and N.K. Krishnan—were also not realising the seriousness of the mistakes and crimes of the PB. The result was the first self-justificatory statement of the PB to the ranks on the editorial of the information bureau organ which sought to explain away the fundamental political mistakes and to titoist crimes of the PB only as "tactical errors", "lag" between the "immense possibilities" and the "actual achievements", under cover of the formal acceptance of the editorial; and which got the universal condemnation from the party ranks. Even Bhowani Sen who had brought out the seriousness and the fundamental nature of the mistakes of the PB also voted for the statement, because his understanding too was not yet deep.

Basing on this sandy foundation the PB embarked upon producing different documents without making a sharp, deep and comprehensive criticism of the PB's sectarian line. These documents attempted to give a positive lead, while making a piecemeal and superficial criticism of left-sectarianism. These are:

(a) "Main features of the Indian People's Democratic Struggles and the Main Tasks of Communist Party"—by Bhowani Sen.



(b) Resolution on "People's Democracy"—by Bhowani Sen.

(c) Resolution on PB's Criticism of Comrade Mao— by Adhikari.

(d) Tactics on the Working class Front— by Lahiri.

(e) Resolution on "Agrarian Question"—by B. T. Ranadive.

All except the last document were circulated to the CC members.

By this time, i.e. April first week, Rajeswara Rao also reached the party centre. Here one thing needs mention. Krishnan was granted leave because of his ill-health and hence he has not been participating in the PB meetings. After this the PB began discussing the abovementioned documents and adopted the documents on "Main Features", criticism of Mao, people's democracy, with certain amendments. The document on trade-union tactics was discussed and it was decided to redraft it, which Lahiri subsequently did. Document on agrarian question was rejected. Rajeswara Rao prepared a document on jail struggle, which was not discussed by the PB for lack of time.

By this time the PB had realised, because of the sharp criticism from the ranks and the cadre of the PB's statement on the information bureau's editorial, that not only its political capacity but also its very bona fides are also in question. Hence it decided to undo the harm done by its abovementioned statement to the ranks. It drafted an appeal in which it accepted that it had committed fundamental trotskyite left-sectarian mistakes, assured the ranks that it will not maintain any titote opposition to international communist movement, and appealed to the ranks to carry on party activity. It decided to circulate to the ranks this appeal, document on "Main Features", resolution on criticism of Mao, in the hope of allaying the honest suspicions of the ranks about the PB and helping them to think on correct lines. It also started inner-party forum as a weapon of inner-party democracy.

Almost all the CCMs present here at that time (only two CCMs from Andhra and the CCM from Assam were due to arrive) opposed violently the circulation of the appeal, publication of the forum and certain formulations in the "Main Features" document. They argued that our acceptance of the formulations

that we had committed trotskyite-titoite type of mistakes would give a handle to the disruptors and cause unnecessary panic among the ranks. They objected to the circulation of the appeal and document "Main Features" unless their amendments, which amounted to minimising the seriousness of the mistakes of the PB and the harm done by left-sectarianism, were accepted. They said that the second issue of the forum should not be issued unless it is approved by them. Hence the PB had to drop the appeal and stop publication of the forum altogether. It circulated the document on "Main Features" and resolution on criticism of Mao to the ranks.

Rajeswara Rao too voted for the circulation of the abovenamed documents while criticising some of the important formulations of the documents on "Main Features". His reason for releasing them to the ranks was that though the documents suffered from many limitations they would be useful to undo some of the harm done by the PB's first statement on the editorial of the information bureau organ.

Apart from the shallow political understanding, the procedure followed by the PB in clearing its own sectarian understanding, in preparing drafts for the CC meeting and in conducting inner-party discussions was also wrong. Hence it was neither able to help itself, nor the CCMs, nor the ranks, to any appreciable extent. It always lagged behind the consciousness and the vigilance of the ranks and cadres. Because of that the few honest attempts it made of undoing the harm it had done met with failure.

Firstly it ought not have embarked upon a long and detailed statement on the editorial of the organ of the information bureau when its understanding could not but be faulty and inadequate. Later basing on that understanding it ought not have undertaken the drafting of documents without first fully settling accounts with the past sectarian line. Instead of that it should have come out with a short statement on the editorial, accepting it without reservation and stating that the editorial and the other international documents demanded a basic examination of the strategy and tactics pursued by the PB, which the PB would

take up immediately with the help of the entire party. Then it should have attempted to draft a small document giving a clear understanding of the main formulations as such of the editorial of the information bureau organ with the help of the other international documents. Then on the basis of that document it should have attempted a self-critical report of the PB reviewing the struggles and movements of the last two years in all their aspects. Then on that basis it should have attempted documents giving positive lead. This procedure would have helped itself and the CCMs and the ranks best. But this is what it exactly did not do.

### **Responsibility of the CCMs**

All this does not mean that CCMs have no responsibility in landing the party in this mess. It is true the PB under the leadership of the general secretary had been guilty of not calling the CC meeting and of badgering individual CCMs into submission. But the CC is the highest party unit inside the party and the integrity, grit and self-sacrificing nature expected of a CCM should be of the highest order. It is with this confidence alone that they would steer the party through the white terror and fascist illegality to our goal that the party congress elected them to the CC. But the hopes of the party congress had been belied.

It is only the PBMs and CCMs from Andhra that put up a somewhat consistent fight against the sectarian line and titoist methods of the PB—specially that of the general secretary—though at times they also vacillated. A good number of CCMs tried to put up a weak fight against PB methods at first, but they collapsed at the first attack. Not only that, some of them had gone to the extent of allowing themselves to be made the tools to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the PB. They later supported the PB in its anti-party methods. A few, though they collapsed at the first attack, were honest enough not to actively support the PB in subduing the other party units or individuals unwillingly to accept the anti-proletarian line and methods of the PB. But even then it is wrong to say they discharged their

responsibility to stand up against the anti-proletarian line and methods of the PB. But what we have to note is that they are a bit better than those who outright began to support PB's anti-party politics and methods after being badgered into submission.

There are a number of CCMs with whom left-sectarianism has become as much a "natural thing" as to some members of the PB; some of them even excelled the PB. They have been almost consistently supporting the PB's anti-working class politics and titoist methods.

It is true, after the editorial of the organ of the information bureau appeared, the CCMs generally have been struggling hard to understand the past mistakes and reorientate themselves along correct path, like the members of the PB. But their subjective desire could not fully be translated into objective reality.

A section of them having been badgered by the PB surrendered to the left-sectarian politics and methods and themselves imbibed them. Hence they were unable to make a quick turn. But when things were explained to them properly they were able to see their mistakes and make a turn.

For another section of the CCMs, left-sectarianism had been as "natural" as with some of the PBMs. They practised it with a zeal. Some of them have acted as "shocktroopers" of the PB in badgering CCMs and PCMs. Completely immersed in the old rut and unable to come out of it, they refused to understand the horrible implication of the political line and organisational methods pursued by the PB, they refused to understand that these were completely anti-Marxist and anti-party. They refused to see the immense harm done to the party by the trotskyite left-sectarian line and titoist methods of the PB. Because of their being overwhelmed by the subjective feelings they objected to the very comparison of the left-sectarian analysis of the PB with that of the Chinese trotskyites in 1926 and also objected to the very mention of the term titoist methods in any document of the PB. They refused to make a turn till the very last, till the CC meeting.

The PB's wrong procedure cannot be put up as a serious argument for the CCMs not making a quick turn. As members

of the highest unit of the party, their responsibility is not less than the PB. In spite of the PB they should have been able to make a turn in such critical situations on their own and discharge their responsibilities as members of the highest unit inside the party.

It is impossible to give even a short account of the role of each CCM during these two years and after the editorial of the information bureau organ, in this short report. A short account of each CCM can be found in the minutes of the CC meeting, which are being circulated along with this report.

The party has to learn a big lesson out of this blackest page in the history of our party. This should be the last time where the CCMs failed to check the anti-proletarian methods and line of the PB. They must stand up independently in spite of all odds for correct things fearlessly and boldly.

In this connection it is also necessary for every CCM to self-critically examine why and how this surrender had taken place. It is generally true and correct to say that our Marxism-Leninism is so weak that it has not given us courage to take a bold stand and fight for the correct line. But it is not enough to say this and thus satisfy ourselves. Besides this general truth, there are cases of opportunist surrender and skin-saving attempts in toeing this openly left-sectarian line, despite the fact that they possess certain fundamental knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and that they see in practice the havoc the sectarian line is causing. Unless and until this kind of refusal to draw lessons from our practice with a view to test the correctness or otherwise of our policies is put an end to : unless the unbolshevik shirking of expressing their point of view is not discarded once and for all, and subjective, opportunist and careerist surrendering tendencies are not fought out and liquidated, the future of our party leadership as a whole and of individual comrade concerned will be dark and dismal. Besides improving, steeling and tempering in the theory of Marxism and Leninism all CCMs must consciously cultivate the habit of uncompromising inner-party struggle for the correct line and practice.

In this connection it is necessary and useful to quote a relevant passage from the "Report on the Fundamental Lessons of the Episode of the Traitor Kostov", delivered to the plenum of the central committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party by the secretary Vulko Chervenkov. In the passage quoted below Chervenkov gives in a masterly way the qualities required of a member of the highest unit of the party, the CC. Here is what he says:

"Apart from the collective spirit, which must become an unbroken rule in the work of the polit bureau and the central committee, we must strengthen a deep adherence to principle admitting of no withdrawals or compromises. In the polit bureau and the central committee, comrades, we must strengthen perfectly clear and pure bolshevik atmosphere. Only those party workers may remain and work in the central committee and the polit bureau, who are as pure as the waters of the Rila Lake, who are upright, who have no secrets kept from others and from the group: who say what they think, do not mince words like diplomats, do not flatter, do not forgive anyone when it is a case of bad work, who are exacting with regard to themselves and others; who do not suffer from liberalism, are not afraid to criticise most severely even their closest friend when the interests of work demand it; who do not grow giddy with past services, do not rest on their laurels; for whom the unity of our party and its strengthening is the highest good in life; who have no greater care than their care for the party, have no other interests apart from the interests of the party; who study, do not remain at the same stage in their learning, and not only do not abandon their studies and live on their old capital, but who go forward, continually raise their political and specialist qualifications; who develop as men with a profound knowledge of the work under their immediate direction; who look into the heart of matters, are never content with what has been achieved, do not suffer from garrulity, are intolerant of shortcomings, never forget that they are leaders and bear historic responsibility before the people and the country, that they are the servants of the party and of the people, mandated by them and accountable to them."

Apart from the CCMs the rest of the party committees and entire party ranks should also fearlessly and regularly participate

in the inner-party discussions and do their duty in shaping the political policy and tactics and decisions on important issues that face the party from time to time. This is the only and sure guarantee against any such Himalayan debacle in future.

### **Serious Situation Inside the Party and Mass Organisation**

The orders of the PB to go into reckless battles, with adventurist forms of struggle, the repeated 'bold calls' for general strikes etc. which hardly materialised, the signal failure not only to correctly lead the agrarian revolution in the countryside but advancing crude sectarian strategy and tactics which resulted in the defeat and disruption of the agrarian struggles and the utter contempt with which the cadres were treated and the way in which discipline minus correct political line was sought to be enforced—threw the party ranks into frustration and demoralisation. The party rank and file and the lower party committees faced with the hard realities of life, began to realise that the sectarian line pursued by the PB is completely wrong and they were disgusted with the anti-party methods of the PB and lost all faith and confidence in the central leadership of the party.

In the absence of any organisational reports from different provinces except Andhra for the last two and a half years, it is difficult to draw a concrete picture as to what devastating damage has been done to the party and mass organisation on an all-India scale. But from the stray oral reports as are gathered from the individual CCMs, we get a dismal picture—a picture of party organisation and different mass organisations being on the verge of liquidation.

Most of the provincial committees and their centres got thoroughly disorganised and some even went out of existence. Most of the cells and lower committees are not properly functioning. The other party committees have been carrying on lifeless functioning and unable to tackle the problems facing them—not knowing a way out—mutual recrimination, throwing the blame upon each other, finally some committees reached the stage of factionalism and got disrupted. The whole of the inner-party life got poisoned. There is no frank expression of one's

own views. The ranks and the party members, even CCMs, unable to participate in the free inner-party discussions, for fear of being dubbed as cowards, betrayers, saboteurs, petty-bourgeois funks and what not! A stinking "barrack like atmosphere" of suspicion, intrigue, tension, and "sealed lips" prevailed inside the party till the editorial of the organ of the information bureau. This is an ideal ground and fertile soil for the growth of disruptors, careerists and spies. This situation is much worse than before the second congress in the days of reformism. The innerlife of the party can best be described by an extract from *Son of the People*, the autobiography of Thorez, the French communist leader. The only difference is that there in France it was a local branch of the party which had worked havoc with the party through its left-sectarian craziness and the leadership of the Communist Party of France with such an experienced leader as Thorez at its head, while here the leadership of the CPI with exceptions of a tiny minority had gone completely left-sectarian and wrought havoc with the whole party. Hence our job is many times more hard and difficult now.

Thorez writes thus, in *Son of the People*, his autobiography: "The Communist Party did its utmost to unite the working class and the impoverished sections of the middle class in action against the ruling class. Within the party itself there were certain elements who did not understand the tactics of 'class against class' which the change in the general situation had made necessary. Before long some of them were even going to desert us. As a reaction against this attitude, the left-wing extremists of the Paris region, deluding themselves as to the real strength of the party and its power of winning over the masses, embarked upon a wildly impracticable policy. Its only result was succession of bureaucratic and mechanical decisions which neither could be, nor were, applied, of skeleton demonstrations brutally broken up by the police, of insistent demands to party members to call a strike as an example, of expulsions on the slightest pretext, of savage attacks against anybody suspected of reformism, and so on and so forth. As an inevitable result of this crazy policy the party tended to become a sect completely cut off from the masses



and to complete the picture, some of the old party leaders, themselves directly responsible for this wild and futile policy, went over to the trotskyist camp, blaming the party and the Comintern for the mistakes they had made and the results of them.

“It was absolutely necessary to carry on the fight on both fronts; against opportunism on the one hand, and against leftism on the other. This was the job I had to undertake to the best of my ability.”

“Further, the particular group which had managed to secure all the key position had completely forsaken the Leninist line... The membership of the party had fallen off. They interpreted the democratic centralism laid down by Lenin in terms of arbitrary decisions from above, passive obedience from all ranks, stifling of all free discussion, suspicion, timid acquiescence or else silence, sealed lips. No fruitful criticism and, in short a barrack-like atmosphere. The party sank to a caricature of itself, reduced to impotence and condemned to vegetate hopelessly instead of being, as it should be, the conscious spearhead of the working class.”

The condition of different mass organisations—such as trade unions, kisan sabha, students’ federation, etc.—is also on the verge of liquidation. They continued working as long as their full legal functioning was allowed by the class enemy. Sectarian policy and adventurist tactics thrust upon them, disrupted their unity, exposed them to the brutal attack from the ruthless enemy, made them helpless and vulnerable before such attacks. With total banning of them in many provinces and virtual illegalisation of them in others, these mass organisations went out of existence for all practical purposes except in name. Non-realisation of the immense necessity of illegal organisation and functioning of the trade unions, kisan sabhas etc., and non-adoption of the method of skilful combination of legal with illegal methods of organisation and mode of work led to practical liquidation of them before the brutal onslaught of the enemy.

It is clear from the above that whereas in the former days our main form of conducting party and mass organisations was legal, the present conditions impose upon us the illegal party and mass

organisations as the main form. Either one has to adapt to it or get liquidated.

### **Remarkable Political Initiative of the Ranks Since the Editorial of the Organ of the Information Bureau**

The eyes of the party ranks and the committees were opened by the editorial of the organ of the information bureau, Peking manifesto and Liu Shao-chi's speech at the Peking conference, and the articles of the leaders of the CPSU(B) on India and other colonial countries. They had broadly found out the reason for this serious state of affairs inside the party. For the first time in the history of the party, the party ranks and cadres have begun to think very seriously about the political line and tactics the party has to follow in future. They are showing justified bitterness and anger against the top party leadership—mainly against the PB—for having led the party into such an abyss. For the first time they are showing unprecedented political initiative in the history of the party, which is a sign of hopeful future for our party. The best proof of this is the unequivocal condemnation by the entire ranks of the self-justificatory statement of the PB on the editorial of the organ of the information bureau. Some of the PCs and comrades had criticised and condemned the statement sharply and brought important fundamental points, which made the PB and CCMs to wake up and make serious efforts to go deeper into the roots of the matter. The later documents of the PB were also criticised correctly by them, as not making a sharp turn and suffering from the left-sectarian understanding. The ranks and the cadres for the first time in the history of the party have been making a strong political criticism of the leadership and contributing their share in hammering out a new political line. It is true that at the time of the second party congress ranks cadres had also shown some political initiative, which of course had been subsequently retarded and crippled by the PB. But the political initiative and the vigilance as are shown by the party ranks and party units of different levels during this period of inner-party struggle for a correct line have no parallel in the history of our party.

Though because of these inner-party discussions the foul "barrack-like atmosphere" is gradually getting shattered, still there is no room for complacency. Even before the party congress, the very vitals of the party were eaten away by the practice of right-reformism for a very long time and a moth-eaten frame was left of it. Left-sectarian elements took charge of it afterwards. Instead of repairing it and rebuilding the party into a strong Bolshevik party, they began to smash the very frame itself. Not a single evil such as bourgeois-liberal methods of organisation, style of work etc. of the right-reformist period was smashed. On the other hand bourgeois authoritarian and Titoist methods of organisation and style of work had been superimposed by left-sectarianism during the last two years. Hence the position has become extremely complicated. It has become very difficult to discern and demarcate right-reformist politics and methods with that of left-sectarianism. It is not impossible to find people practising right-reformism under cover of left-sectarian slogans (i.e. revolutionaries in words and reformists in action) and vice versa. While left-sectarian tendencies are still resisting correction, the right-reformist tendencies which lay have been raising their ugly head and openly carrying on the disruption. They are moving heaven and earth to take the party back to reformism under the cover of fighting left-sectarianism, while paying lip-service to the line of the information bureau. In this atmosphere some careerists, opportunists and disgruntled elements also are trying to make use of the present confused situation inside the party and bag honest elements for carrying on their anti-party aims.

The colonial thesis on party organisation has very sharply pointed out that "anarchism is the opposite pole of bureaucracy". The organisational method pursued by the PB and permeated to all levels of party organisation is something more than mere bureaucracy—it is authoritarianism, pure and simple. As a result of prolonged suppression of inner-party democracy and arbitrary actions in dealing with individual members and party committees and due to sudden awakening of the ranks to the overwhelming state of affairs inside the party—a violent reaction leading to the other end is bound to be there. Already the signs of opposition

to all centralisation, to all leadership, to all stringent discipline are visible inside the party. Both in Calcutta as well as in Bombay, important party units and party comrades have raised the slogan of "reorganisation of the party from below with rank-and-file initiative" threatening higher units with implementation of the above slogan bypassing the higher committees. Taking advantage of the prevailing confusion inside the party and angry mood of the party ranks against the policy and practice of the PB, the just and healthy urge of the party ranks for restoring the inner-party democracy—i.e. their right to participate in shaping the policy of the party and to set up a party leadership on the basis of election—is sought to be exploited by the opportunist and disruptive elements for their own end. Such instances are not many, but these are dangerous tendencies which, if allowed to grow, can only end in disrupting and liquidating the party.

The central committee has to wage a simultaneous battle both for rooting out the authoritarian Titoite methods of organisation of the old PB as well as the anarchic tendencies that have begun to rear head inside the party as a reaction to those methods and in the name of inner-party democracy.

Neither mere formal democracy nor mere waving the rod of discipline to enforce central authority can rid the party organisation of such dangerous poisons. The necessary preliminary conditions for fighting both the evils "are the development and maintenance of living associations and mutual relations within the party between the directing organs and members, as well as between the party and the masses of the proletariat outside the Party"—the way out shown by the Communist International theses on party organisation.

The conditions, as now prevail inside the party, provide fertile soil for breeding spies and provocateurs and enemy agents. It is only through a constant vigilance on the part of all party units and each party member and also by sticking to the correct organisational principles in spite of all provocations that the real danger that threatens the party from this end can be successfully averted.

It is a long, hard and difficult job for the CC and PB to fulfil the task of cleansing the Augean stables created by both right-

reformism and left-sectarianism, with the aid of the PCs and DCs and other committees and of the ever-vigilant political initiative of the ranks.

### **Main Organisational Tasks Before the CC**

What are the main organisational tasks that emerge out of the situation as narrated above?

(1) The CC shall have to put an end to the “barrack-like” and “sealed-lip” atmosphere inside the party once for all. The CC shall have to forge effective methods to establish complete inner-party democracy and create conditions in which all party members can get the full opportunity to participate in the inner-party discussion for hammering out the new correct strategy and tactics of Indian people’s democratic revolution for national liberation.

(2) As a condition for creating such an atmosphere all disciplinary actions taken against individuals and party units by the PB and also by different party committees under its guidance, shall have to be reviewed and reconsidered in the background of the wrong political line and organisational methods pursued by the PB and other lower units of the party. In reviewing, existing conditions of the individuals and party committees against which actions were taken shall also have to be taken into consideration.

(3) The CC has to take steps for reorganising the PCs, DCs, and other party committees, wherever such reorganisation is necessary, basing on the principle of proletarian democracy and strict centralisation;—i.e. in evolving the party leadership at different levels of party organisation, conscious association of the party ranks in selecting such leadership has to be ensured, keeping however in view the present illegal condition of the party and condition of white terror prevailing inside the country. Such reorganisation can take place on the basis of a full discussion of the new party line and on the basis of full criticism and self-criticism of the activities of different comrades and party committees and of review of past activities and struggles, in the light of the new understanding of the party policy.

However to start work immediately, wherever the situation demands, the CC will appoint provisional committees for

breaking the immediate deadlock in the party organisation, with those comrades who can command the general confidence of the ranks and who are capable of fulfilling the tasks facing the respective party unit in this critical juncture.

(4) Keeping in view the present illegal condition of the party and the condition of white terror let loose by the Nehru-Patel regime, the illegal party apparatus has to be thoroughly reorganised on a sound scientific basis, the method of combining the legal and illegal functioning of the party and mass organisations has to be mastered and measures have to be taken to ensure the full utilisation of the legal possibilities that still exist.

(5) The entire party leadership and the party ranks have to be educated in Marxism-Leninism and serious efforts have to be made to raise the theoretical level of the entire party. This equipping the party with the knowledge of Marxist-Leninist theory coupled with the free participation of all party members and party units in shaping the party policy can alone guarantee to keep the party on the correct rails and also enable the comrades to carry on their practical activities with initiative and Bolshevik efficiency.

(6) The CC must make conscious and consistent efforts to root out all old anti-party bourgeois organisational ideas, methods, habits, and style of work—both right-reformist and left-sectarian. It must instal Bolshevik organisational ideas, *methods, habits and style of work, basing itself on the teaching of the Lenin and Stalin on the same and the organisational principles laid down in the "Theses on Organisation and Structure of the Communist Parties" adopted at the third congress of the Communist International in 1921, together with the "Statutes of the CI" and force the CPI as an effective vanguard of working*  
*leading of the armed struggle as the main*  
*the armed struggle with other*  
*the warning of the organ of*  
*efarious attempts of the titoist*  
*India and lead the continued*  
*party away from those vipers.*

(8) The CC has to make serious efforts to clear the misunderstandings and bridge the gulf that has been created between international communist movement—above all the Communist Party of China, CPGB and its leader R. P. Dutt who has been helping our party in innumerable ways since its inception—by the bourgeois-chauvinist and sectarian blunders of the PB. The CC has to make unswerving efforts to re-establish the bona fides of the CPI with the international communist movement and forge healthy and fraternal relations with the brother parties of the world—above all, CPSU(B), the CP of China and CPGB. The CC has to make conscious endeavour to trace closely and counteract the poison spread over a long period—overtly or covertly—by both left-sectarian and right-reformist trends inside the leadership against the brother parties and their leaders.

Hereafter the CC should make available to the ranks all the important documents, articles and other materials of the brother parties. All the important documents of the information bureau also to be made available to the ranks, to make them keep a vigilant eye against any anti-proletarian tendencies that are likely to raise their head inside the party in future and help them to counteract the poison already spread.

(9) The CC must make conscious and consistent endeavour to discard the old practice of CC to be virtually the federation of provincial units and PB to be the co-ordinating committee of that federation. *It must build itself up as a united political team and leadership of the entire party and mass movement, through collective functioning, gaining by imbibing the experience of the movement of all provinces, improving the capacities of the CC as a whole and individually and collectively by increasing their knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and its correct application, and behaving in an ideal way in the matter of hard work, revolutionary honesty, integrity and self-sacrifice etc.*

(10) The PB must improve its functioning as a subordinate body of the CC and work under the political guidance of the CC.

No person or persons, however big he or they might be, should be allowed to be placed above the CC or PB. No decision of importance to be allowed to be taken by one or a few individuals

on their own without the sanction of the CC or PB. Every comrade must be made to subject himself to the iron discipline of the party in general and his unit in particular based on democratic centralism.

### **The Best Course Out of this Critical Situation:**

What is the proper course before the CC to get the party out of this morass and to have its organisational tasks implemented?

The serious political mistakes and the colossal organisational mess which the entire party has been subjected to demand the convening of a party congress for hammering out a correct line and also for evolving a new leadership to put this line into practice.

But the party in India is passing through the condition of complete illegality for all practical purposes. Today nobody can think of holding a party congress openly and legally when, under condition of white terror, even an ordinary trade union or kisan sabha executive meeting cannot be openly and legally held.

A party congress presupposes, and our party constitution enjoins, the election of delegates for the party congress with the participation of every party unit all over the country which means a series of party conferences in all the provinces— at different organisational levels. Those who are aware of the thoroughly disorganised and devastating condition of party organisation and its tech in different provinces, the unmistakable existence of enemy agents very close to its periphery who are making every effort to blow up the party and also the condition of white terror through which the country as a whole and some provinces in particular have been passing, would not advice to embark upon the adventure of holding a series of conferences on an all-country scale. There may be exceptional cases where holding of local district or provincial conference would be an imperative necessity even taking the gravest possible risks but to prescribe it on an all-country scale is not to realise the dangerous reality of the situation at all.

To hold a party congress without properly elected delegates from all the provinces with the participation of the *entire* party



ranks list to play false with the very idea of a party congress which we have no right to do.

Moreover, in underground conditions, to hold a party congress worth its name, even with minimum delegates, is to run the gravest possible risk. We have yet neither a liberated area of our own, nor a safe and easily approachable country near our border where we can go and hold such a congress with safety.

Taking all these factors into consideration, an enlarged session or the plenum of the central committee with the participation of the representatives of the provincial committees emerges as the proper solution for giving final shape to the decisions of the CC in evolving a correct line and electing proper central leadership of the party.

But the CC, by all means, shall have to ensure the full discussion over the new line among the entire party ranks. Each party unit and every comrade should take initiative to contribute his best in evolving the correct line. This will unify the party as a solid rock on a correct party policy and ensure the success of the CC plenum. The party constitution adopted at the second party congress provides for a plenum of the central committee in place of a party congress under critical circumstances when it is impossible to call a party congress:

“Extraordinary congresses are called by the central committee on its own initiative or at the demand of party units having a representation of not less than one-third of the total party members represented at the last party congress. The extraordinary congress is to be considered as having full powers if it has delegates representing not less than half the membership of the party represented at the last regular party congress. Representation quotas at the congress and the method of election are decided by the central committee.

“*Note:* It is impossible to call a congress of the party, the central committee will call an enlarged session or the plenum of the central committee with the participation of the representatives of the provincial committees”.

Further provision is made for the reconstitution of the CC but on the condition that confirmation of the same is got at an all-India congress or conference.

**“The central committee, under exceptional circumstances, is empowered to reconstitute itself and other committees and fractions and to frame new rules. This reconstitution should be confirmed as soon as possible in an all-India congress or an all-India party conference, called by the central committee”.**

If both the above provisions taken together, the position boils down to this:

(a) In such critical situations when the party has to hammer out a new strategy and tactics, a party congress or at least an extended plenum has to be held.

(b) Reconstitution of the CC can either be made at the party congress and extended plenum of CC or have to be subsequently ratified by any one of them.

Hence in these circumstances we can and have to hold the extended plenum of the CC as the best possible course.

We have to remember that the enemies of party won't sit quiet until we find methods of correcting the past mistakes and evolve a new line. They are already on the move with a view to deliver smashing blows while the party is in political confusion and wipe it out before it can hammer out a new line and reorientate itself on that basis. The imperialists and their agents, the Indian big business, unleashed a new wave of fascist terror unknown in the history of our country, not only against Telangana and Andhra districts of the Madras presidency but on all our strongholds throughout the country, such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu, eastern UP, parts of Bihar, Assam, Manipur, Tripura, etc. The white terror and civil war let loose in Telangana and Madras presidency is no ordinary thing—shooting down our party members and sympathisers at sight, inhuman torture in specially-made torture chambers, shooting down comrades by bringing them out of subjails etc. Their plan is to wipe out our strongholds before the situation goes out of their control. The Congress government is making serious efforts under the guidance of Anglo-American imperialists to square up its quarrels with the reactionary puppet government of Pakistan, not only to stem the tide of the revolution in the Indian subcontinent but also to help the imperialists to drown the revolutionary national-liberation movements of

Southeast Asia. Another concrete purpose of these attempts at rapprochement is to sandwich the resistance areas like hill border regions of Mymensingh district, Manipur, Tripura, etc. on the borders of India and Pakistan.

The leadership of the Socialist Party of India, lackeys of big business, have let loose a barrage of lies and slander against the party. They are not only trying hard to isolate us from other progressive left groups, but also appealing to the Congress government to realise that this policy of armed struggle in the rural side is more dangerous than the previous adventurist tactics of our party and to suppress us all the more vigorously and help them in their nefarious game.

The renegades thrown out of the party are making every effort under the leadership of Joshi to disrupt the party from inside and are waiting for their chance to split the party.

In such a serious situation, the party cannot sit and go on discussing the new line alone. It has to carry on a two-fold task simultaneously if it is serious at all about the guidance given in the editorial of the information bureau organ and the Peking manifesto.

The party has firstly to get out of the old sectarian and reformist rut and hammer out a new clear cut strategy and tactics.

Secondly, to proceed steadily to put the party on the rails of armed struggle in the countryside and rebuild the unity of the working class and the movement in the cities on the basis of one new line and tactics.

To lose sight of either of the above and to forget that both are to be simultaneously fulfilled leads finally to liquidate the party and the revolutionary movement altogether. With this aim in view, the CC has to find a way out of this critical situation facing the party.

In this situation, the only way out before the party is that the present CC has to act with responsibility, coolness of judgement and courage. The CC while on the one hand has to take the necessary and immediate steps to fulfil the abovestated two-fold aim, at the same time, it has to evolve such methods as to enable the ranks to participate fully and contribute their maximum to the hammering out of a new clear-cut strategy and tactics.

For this, the present CC has to do the following things:

(1) Chalk out broad lines of new strategy and tactics on the basis of the editorial of the information bureau organ and on the basis of Peking conference discussions etc.

(2) Reconstitute the present CC on the basis of the abovestated broad lines of the new strategy and tactics and the self-critical evaluation of the PBMs and CCMs etc. There should be no bar to include party leaders from outside the present CC, to be included in the reconstituted CC.

(3) This reconstituted CC will elect a PB. The new CC and PB will prepare the final drafts, on the basis of the discussion and decisions of the outgoing CC and circulate them to the ranks for discussion. The reconstituted CC will conduct widespread and intense discussions.

Extended plenum of the reconstituted CC including the representatives of the PCs will have to conclude the discussions and take the political and organisational decisions in the course of six months.

Meanwhile the new CC has to put the party on the rails of the new line enunciated in the drafts that are put for discussion and decision.

(4) The new CC will arrange to get the opinion of the information bureau and the international comrades on the documents released for discussion and organisational decisions taken by the present CC.

### **Dissolution of the PB**

Before taking up the question of its reconstitution, the CC has to dissolve the PB and remove B. T. Ranadive from the general secretaryship for the following reasons :

Ranadive has been the initiator, executor and dogged defender of the trotsky-tito type of left-sectarian political line. The polit bureau had fallen in line, conciliated and abetted him in carrying out his anti-Leninist, liquidationist line, which has resulted in the party and mass movement being brought to the point of total disruption. The manifestations of that line are:

(a) Repudiation of the Lenin-Stalin teachings on imperialism and colonial revolutions, which resulted in equating the present stage of Indian revolution to the socialist stage.

(b) Sabotage of the agrarian revolution and armed struggle and adventurist tactics in towns and villages which brought the mass movement to the verge of total disruption.

(c) Bringing in of the titoist organisational methods—which resulted in almost disrupting the party organisation, suppressing inner-party democracy and poisoning innerparty life.

(d) Anti-international attitude and violation of the very principles of fraternal relations with brother parties, which resulted in overt and covert slander of brother parties and their leaders, supreme complacency and lack of vigilance against spies etc.

(e) Rejection of all creative Marxism under the slogan “we recognise nobody except Marx-Engles-Lenin-Stalin” and finally distortion of all Marxism-Leninism to suit its own left-sectarian adventurist purposes.

The polit bureau as a whole was responsible for all the crimes stated above. But this does not mean either that every member of the polit bureau was responsible for all the crimes stated above or that every member was responsible in the same degree taking each crime singly. The different members of the polit bureau were responsible for the above crimes in varying degrees.

This has been already given in the earlier part of the document.

### **Reconstitution of the CC and the PB**

The CC, if it has to be a functioning body under the present conditions of white terror has to be a considerably smaller body than elected at the time of the party congress, say 11 or 13. The number can be increased as the movement develops and requires a bigger CC by including new competent cadre thrown up by the movement.

The “Theses on the Organisation and Structure of the Communist Parties” of the CI give the guiding rule for the constitution of CC and PB thus:

“In order to study the general and political situation and gain a clear idea of the state of affairs in the party, it is necessary to have various localities represented on the central committee whenever decisions are to be passed affecting the life of the entire

party. For the same reason, differences of opinion regarding tactics should not be suppressed by the central committee if they are of a serious nature. On the contrary, these opinions should get representation upon the central committee. But the smaller bureau (polit bureau) should be conducted along uniform lines and in order to carry on a firm and sure policy, it must be able to rely upon its own authority as well as upon a considerable majority of the central committee”.

This means :

(1) Political level and capacities of a member are the main criterion, the CC must collectively represent the experience of the entire movement.

(2) “Considerable majority” of the CC must consist of those who are firmly convinced of the new line and can carry it out effectively.

“Differences of opinion regarding tactics ..... if they are of a serious nature” as told above, should get represented on the CC.

(3) The PB must be a politically united team with no tactical differences accommodated inside it. “Should be conducted along uniform lines” as the theses of the Communist International say. Otherwise the united and regular functioning becomes impossible.

In the condition of inner-party situation and particularly in the CC, it is not possible to completely realise the directives given by the CI as regards the constituting of the CC and the PB. But we must bear in mind the directives and struggle hard to arrive at organisational decisions approximating to them.

What should be the criterion for the election of the members of CC?

(1) Unreservedly accept the new line of the party.

(2) Political and organisational capacities to get things done. In critical situation, no vacillations either opportunistic or political, but stand like a rock amidst storm (the political-organisational capacities of individual have to be judged in relation to his past activities).

(3) Even if one, on his own, is not able to give correct solutions to major problems, at least he must have an ear to learn from the party ranks and masses and pose organisational, political and mass problems before the CC and enrich the CC with experience.

(4) The CCMs who had been the propounders and fanatical executors of this sectarian line and adopted turkish-titoist methods of organisations, who have refused to even think about their sectarian line even after the editorial of the information bureau appeared, and who after months of discussion of the new line refused to orientate in spite of the sharp criticism of the ranks, must not, as far as possible, be entrusted with heavy responsibility of the CC and PB membership until they prove in practice that they are once again fit for being entrusted with such responsibility.

### **Directive for the Functioning of the CC and PB**

The central committee must be developed into a "supreme collective leader" and "a monolithic hammer which strikes at one point" of the party, which will be able to collectively tackle big problems arising out of the movement and gain the confidence of the entire party. Here is what Chervenkov says about it in his report to the plenum of the CC of Bulgarian Communist Party.

"It follows from this that the harm ensuing from every infringement of the collective character of work in the party leadership, from every underestimation of the central committee as the supreme directing staff in the country must be fully and thoroughly acknowledged.

"It follows from this that the non-Bolshevik methods indicated must be entirely and mercilessly sent to the devil, not a vestige of them must remain, and Bolshevik methods of work must be established for ever in the central committee, the collective character of work must be consolidated with all our might, the central committee must be advanced more and more as the supreme collective leader of the entire political, public, economic and cultural life of the country. No institute, no organisation, no personality in our country can or may stand above the central committee, above the polit bureau. No decision of importance to the country may be taken, no action of importance for our country and the workers may be undertaken without its agreement and confirmation. This must become an iron law for all."

(1) The aim of the CC functioning must be to develop a politically united, competent all-India leadership. The past

practice of double-membership, except in specific cases, has to go. CCMs can be attached to PCs wherever necessary.

(2) CC to meet on all important political and organisational issues and take decisions. It must meet at least once in 4 months.

(3) The PB to be in continuous session and take collective decisions and is entrusted with the responsibility of carrying out the decisions and the work of the central committee between its sessions. The secretary has to act with initiative within these limits. Though the PB can and has to take initiative on major political and organisational issues also, they have to be got confirmed by the CC as soon as possible.

(4) The slipshod and chaotic methods of functioning has to be put an end to. Division of functions and the principle of individual responsibility have to be introduced if the jobs have to be properly done and done in time. These following functions of the CC have to be collectively discharged or divided between PBMs and CCMs. To discharge these functions, committees have to be organised whenever necessary; general pol-org guidance; guidance to different PCs; fronts—trade-union and student fraction committees, kisan and agricultural labour; committees for agit-prop, legal journals and illegal journals, publication of agit-prop literature; party education, legal theoretical journal, illegal party forum and publication of theoretical books; tech; finance and treasury; special; fraternal relations with brother parties; women and youth. No special department for grading and checking up cadre at present, but should be one of the tasks of the PB.

(5) The mass front fraction committees have to work under the close guidance of the CC. They must keep in touch with the mass movement not only through reports but direct contact with the important centres of that front. A circular on the functioning of the fractions is to be prepared.

### **Reorganisation of the Provincial Committees and District Committees and Tasks of the PCs.**

In view of the wholesale dissolution and reorganisation of PCs carried on by the PB to push through its own trotskyite politics, and the consequent reorganisation of certain DCs by the PCs on



the same lines, it is imperative on the part of the CC to reorganise the PCs and make arrangements for the reorganisation of the DCs and other committees with capable comrades who command the confidence of the ranks, if the tasks set before the CC are to be fulfilled.

Some comrades are raising the slogan that the present PCs, DCs and other party committees have to be thrown out wholesale and these have to be reconstituted with others outside the present committees, because these are trotskyite-titoite committees organised by the trotskyite-titoite PB.

This slogan is as disruptive, if not more, as the titoite methods of the PB. This means that the same methods as applied by the old PB have to be adopted towards the present committees. This has nothing in common with the party of the proletariat whose single aim is to bring the people's democratic revolution to success and lead the battle for building up socialism.

As matter of fact it is wrong to characterise PB as a trotskyite-titoite body, simply because it had adopted trotskyite-titoite political line and organisational methods. It is doubly wrong to characterise the PCs, DCs and other party committees as trotskyite-titoite bodies because either they were reorganised by the PB or they carried the directions of the PB. This is the formal logic of a bourgeois logician but not of a dialectical materialist. Whether those comrades who raise this slogan mean it or not, this is opening wide the gate of the party to those who have taken the path of renegacy after having been thrown out of the party and to stinking right-reformism. This is the same contempt for cadres which the left-sectarian PB has been guilty of. Cadres are not created in a day. They are created over a long period through not only their individual efforts but also the hard collective efforts of the party and they embody the collective experience of the party as a whole. The party that treats the cadres shabbily like dirt cannot be a revolutionary party.

It is true that hard-boiled incorrigibles both of the left-sectarian and right-reformist variety who have become fossilised and who are immune to any change, have to be kept out of

responsible positions and if necessary thrown out of the party. But the method to be applied on the whole to the cadres in the party of the proletariat is the method of correction, especially in times of crisis like ours at present, unless the very honesty and Bolshevik devotion to the cause of the comrades is in question. This is the method followed by the brother parties, even the CPSU(B) the leader of the world communist movement. You can find innumerable instances from the history of the CPSU(B) as well as histories of brother parties. The proposed wholesale removal of the present party committees is as much disruptive and harmful to our cause, as the wholesale reorganisation of the party committees the PB has been carrying on till now.

Here the comrades have to remember another important point. In the party the main political responsibility of a wrong political line lies with the highest committees of the party, i.e. the PB and the CC and it increasingly lessens as we go to the lower committees. Hence the party has to adopt a more liberal attitude towards the lower committees. The principles which are applied for the reconstitution of the CC have to be applied more and more liberally as we go down the ladder of our party organisation.

Keeping the above principles in view the PCs or POCs, DCs, and other party committees have to be reorganised from those who are at present in the committees and others outside, on the following lines:

(1) The POCs, or PCs have to consist of 7 members and a secretariat of 3, or only a PC of 5 without a secretariat as occasion demands.

(2) The members accept the new line. Those who oppose the line either from left-sectarian or from right-reformist angles have to be kept out

This does not mean that every syllable of the interpretation of the CC of the lead of the information bureau should be accepted. But the agrarian revolution and the guerilla armed struggle as the main form of struggle and the strategy given by the information bureau should be accepted.

(3) Those comrades who have political organisational capacities to get things done.

(4) Those comrades of the proletarian or peasant origin who have got an ear for the party ranks and the masses and who can at least pose problems before their committees, even though they may not be able to give solutions on their own because of lack of Marxist theoretical foundation.

(5) Those comrades who have practised titoist organisational methods in the extreme and have lost the confidence of the ranks completely have to be kept out of the committees.

(6) Those comrades who had opposed either the trotskyite politics or the titoist methods of the PB even feebly have to be given preference.

### **Plenums and Conferences**

The party in the present conditions of extreme illegality and delicate national and international situation, cannot embark upon a complete system of conferences and elections from bottom to top.

Hence plenums and conferences have to be organised wherever indispensable after fullest possible political discussions and perfect tech arrangements, consistent with the condition of white terror and safety of the party. New committees have to be elected at those plenums or conferences after full political discussions and self-criticism.

At other places committees can be reorganised from top at the meeting of important comrades basing on the general discussions on the new line.

### **Some Directives to the PCs**

(1) The old organisation on the basis of government administrative divisions has to go. The party has to be reorganised entirely on a new basis suited to the present line. This is to be the form in which it has to be reorganised, i.e. PCs, regional committees where the party has spread to sufficiently wide areas, area committees, zonal committees etc. This does not mean that this has to be done with a pen-stroke overnight. The party has to be put on a new basis gradually as the movement develops along new line. A separate circular has to be sent giving details about the new organisational form.

(2) The present apparatus of the PCs is top heavy both organisationally, technically and financially. There is no division of jobs and individual responsibility. The PCs' finances are in a chaos. They collect very little money. Most of them either are living on the sale of the property or subsidies of the CC. The state of CC finance is much more horrible.

This state of affairs cannot continue any longer, if the party is to come out of this mess and survive at all. The present apparatus of the PCs has to be dismantled and simplified, in consonance with the strength and resources of the party in different provinces, and not on either sale of properties or subsidies from the CC. The principle of division of jobs and individual responsibility has to be applied as far as possible.

(3) The provincial committees have to review cases of disciplinary action taken against committees and individuals in the last two years as need be considered, and take suitable measures in the light of the new political line.

(4) The PCs must be vigilant against spies and agents provocateurs who are trying to utilise the present confused situation inside the party to spread scandals and rumours and disrupt the party from within. Special care has to be taken against the activities of titoite spies, about whom the information bureau has given an open warning. This can effectively be done by making the entire ranks vigilant over the matter. However this should not be allowed to develop into a spy-scare.

(5) Inner-party discussions have to be organised on the widest possible scale, basing on the international documents and the documents of the CC. The PCs have to start forums in their respective national languages for conducting these inner-party discussions.

(6) The PCs have to prepare the political organisational reviews of the movement of the last 2 years with the past background in respective provinces, basing on the understanding given in the new line. This is absolutely necessary for getting a correct understanding of the past for the unification of the party. Unless the job is done in a thoroughgoing fashion, remnants of

the past wrong understanding will persist and obstruct the path forward every time. This is also necessary for the CC to get a consolidated picture of the all-India movement and to prepare a consolidated report which will be the basis for evolving clear-cut tasks.

(7) While fulfilling the above tasks, the PCs and the POCs have to fulfil their day-to-day tasks of a provincial unit, must stand at the head of mass movements on every live issue, must unite them and develop armed struggle in the rural areas on the basis of agrarian revolution.

Comrades of the CC! Our party is facing a most critical situation in its entire history. All the enemies of the party, Anglo-American imperialists, big-business lackeys, the reactionary leadership of the Socialist Party and renegades thrown out of the party are making every effort to spread demoralisation and confusion inside the party and the masses behind it, in order to smash it from both inside and outside. The reactionary Nehru-Patel government has launched another wave of fascist terror campaign on our strongholds to wipe them out altogether.

The party is not only facing a serious danger but also extremely favourable opportunities. The enemies' camp is torn by conflicts and is disrupting. The peoples are everywhere very much discontented and disillusioned about the Congress and its fascist rule. They are rising in their own way in defence of their interests and resisting the fascist onslaught. There is a general leftward swing among the rank and file of the left parties. The international situation is extremely favourable. If we make a quick turn, evolve a new line and put our shoulders collectively to the wheel, our party will again be able to make a turn, to utilise the extremely favourable situation offered before it and march forward steadily on the path of guerilla armed struggle basing on agrarian revolution for the success of the People's Democratic Revolution.

Comrades of the CC! We are the members of the highest unit of our party and the political leadership of the entire party. A great responsibility lies on our head. Let us keep only the interests

of our party and the revolutionary movement at heart, and make a united effort to understand our past mistakes in the light of the editorial of the information bureau organ and other international documents, strengthened by the sharp criticisms from the ranks and cadres that have been pouring in since editorial of the information bureau organ appeared. Let us act up to the trust the ranks are still reposing in us in spite of our past mistakes. Let us take momentous political and organisational decisions, which will be the basis for getting the party out of the morass. Otherwise history will not forgive us!

## Report On Left Deviation Inside the CPI\*

### INTRODUCTION

That the Communist Party of India was sunk deep in right-reformism and suffered heavily from it for a number of years is common knowledge of every party member. Hardly did we make a turn from it and start locating it in all its hidden manifestations in order to root it out, when the monster of left-sectarianism has gripped the party in its talons—a monster no less dangerous than right-reformism.

It is full two years since the Communist Party of India held its second party congress at which a long political thesis had been adopted and a number of other important resolutions also had been passed. In these last two years a serious inner-party struggle has been and is being conducted not only to unify the party on the basis of the new political line adopted by the second party congress, but also to get at the completely correct and clear understanding as regards the range, strategy and tactics of our struggle. This inner-party struggle is expressed in a number of documents drafted and submitted by different provincial committees, members of the central committee and the polit bureau. Out of them, the draft note submitted by the provincial committee secretariat of Andhra—incidentally, the secretariat is comprised of two members of the polit bureau and four members of the central committee—that was discussed and drafted in the month of April 1948, hardly one month after the second party congress, and the subsequent criticism of the polit bureau on it which obtains in the form of three main documents—i.e. *Some Questions of Strategy and Tactics* (called the *Tactical Line* in the present document), *On the Agrarian Question* and *On People's Democracy*—are the key and basic ones in which a good many highly controversial issues are discussed and decided one way or another.

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\* Draft critique submitted by the members of the Central Committee from Andhra and approved by the Central Committee of the C.P.I. in its May-June 1950 meeting, published in May 1950

In the same period, a number of important articles by eminent Marxist writers both on India and on general theoretical and political questions have been published in the international communist press. Particularly significant for us are those by the Soviet and the Chinese leaders like Zhukov, Dyakov, Alexeyev, Schneerson, Ostrovitianov, Mao, Liu Shao-chi and others. The resolution of the information bureau of the nine parties' conference (IBNPC) on the Tito gang and the ideological, theoretical struggle that has been unleashed on Leninist-Stalinist lines throughout the world in the communist parties is another historic event of the period. The discussions and deliberations of the Peking Conference of the Trade Unions of Asia and Oceania and the editorial that appeared in the *Lasting Peace*, organ of IBNPC, dated 27 January 1950, are of special importance, because they have direct bearing on the problems facing India.

In the light of all these it is incumbent on us, the members and leaders of the Communist Party of India, to examine self-critically the whole understanding, outlook and practice of the Communist Party of India and its leadership, so that prompt and proper lessons and tasks are deduced from it for the future work and progress of the revolutionary movement in India. In a nutshell, this is the purpose and scope of this document.

The second party congress and its resolutions as embodied in the political thesis are an important step in the life of the Indian Communist Party and a big political event inside the country. It is a genuine attempt to rescue the party from the mire of reformism in which it had been sunk for a long time.

The thesis succeeded in bringing out sharply the following salient points:

(a) The post-second-world-war international situation and the new alignment of forces in which the people's camp is sharply brought out, though the correlation of forces in India is wrongly estimated.

(b) The post-war crisis, the severe effects on the working class and the other toiling millions of India, and the consequent anti-imperialist mass upsurge, the machinations of imperialism and the reactionary big bourgeoisie to counter that upsurge, are also prominently brought out.



(c) It has taken note broadly of the fact that the new ruling bloc of imperialism, feudalism and the bourgeoisie now represents the chief immediate enemy of the revolution, and hence the national-liberation struggle is to be conducted not only against imperialism and feudalism, as in the past, but also against the collaborationist bourgeoisie (though it failed to distinguish the middle bourgeoisie from the big bourgeoisie and lumped them together). A sharp break is made from the former reformist understanding of the Mountbatten award and "to parade this new status as national freedom or national advance" is severely attacked and exposed. "The Mountbatten award does not really signify a retreat of imperialism, but its cunning counter offensive against the rising forces of the Indian people" (*Political Thesis*).

(d) Though the agrarian part of the thesis is weak and without enough elaboration nevertheless it has shown how the feudal and precapitalist relations on land have brought ruin and misery to the overwhelming millions of colonial masses, i.e. the peasantry; the slogan of abolition of landlordism and land to the tiller is brought to the forefront.

(e) A call to rally "all the classes for whom the success of the democratic revolution is vital" and who are interested in defeating this new counter-revolutionary bloc of imperialism, feudalism and the collaborating bourgeoisie is brought out in striking relief in the thesis; it also gave a corresponding democratic programme.

(f) The conception of working class hegemony which was in a way watered down in the period of reformism has been reinstated in the thesis with due emphasis even though its understanding of the concept of hegemony is crude and mechanical.

But this is not all. There are some serious shortcomings and dangerous roots of left-sectarianism from which the thesis suffered. Before we analyse them, it is also necessary to comprehend the circumstances in which the new line had been discussed and adopted. The draft thesis had seen the light of day in December 1947, and that too only in English. It took some weeks more to get it translated into different national languages and reach it to the ranks. Between the second party congress

where the thesis was adopted and the time when the original draft was issued there was hardly a month's interval within which the ranks were called upon to discuss and contribute. That too without the self-critical report of the central committee by which alone it could have been possible to pick up all the threads, understand the deviations, note the departures and participate actively in the discussion. Added to this one cannot ignore the fact that the theoretical level of the whole party ranks was poor since it was in an emasculated condition due to the systematic discouragement of study of the theory of Marxism-Leninism in the preceding long period of reformism.

It was under these limitations that the second party congress was held. Even the congress itself imposed further limitations of its own. It was composed of a huge delegation, as much as a thousand, out of which six to seven hundred attended. Further there was wide disparity of levels in the delegation. The time before the congress was short—just seven days, within which a number of resolutions besides the thesis had to be pushed through while the self-critical report of the central committee was given three days after the commencement of the congress, and only just a few hours before the discussion of the thesis was taken up. By the time of the meeting of the congress, severe repression was unleashed on the three major provinces of the south, thereby preventing several leading cadres from attending the congress and keep the whole congress in an atmosphere of tension.

The abovementioned state of affairs naturally had their repercussions and reflections on the deliberations of the congress.

Consequently the thesis suffered from the following principal shortcomings:

(a) The new constellation of class forces on a world scale in the post-second-world-war period is defined as one in which the entire world bourgeoisie, ranged together with its reformist hangers-on and reactionary supporters, is attempting to stem the tide of revolution and oppose the working class, the people, socialist Soviet Union and eastern democracies and colonial people. At the same time the aspect of bourgeois collaboration

inside India is talked of loosely and vaguely, and not in precise and specific terms. While discussing the economic basis of collaboration, it generally speaks of 'big business'. The following quotations from the *Political Thesis* bear testimony to this: "The accumulation has made the Indian bourgeoisie —big business— ambitious and to look in all directions for investment... Notwithstanding the growth of liquid capital and ambitions, Indian big business is hemmed in from all sides by its backwardness, colonial limitations and dependence on Britain— factors which the latter is fully exploiting". "The sum earned by India through exports is too little to finance the requirements of big business and it is thus brought to face the bitter truth that for its very existence it is dependent on America or Britain."

But at the same time, throughout the thesis, whenever it spoke of collaboration, it used the phrase "bourgeois collaboration" which is vague and which may mean either the big business or the entire bourgeoisie. This ambiguity and consequent confusion on it is best demonstrated when further discussions arose on this specific topic, how some of the members of the polit bureau themselves who were also member of the drafting committee of the political thesis, came forth with different interpretations of the phrase "bourgeois collaboration" at different times and argued that the middle bourgeoisie at certain stage of the revolution can either be neutralised or brought into the democratic front. For example, Mehta in his note on the draft resolution of the Andhra secretariat (which was accepted by many members of the polit bureau), makes the following formulation: "Undoubtedly the lower sections of the bourgeoisie in the urban and rural areas, middle-sized traders and a section of the rich farmers, we will be able to neutralise in the course of the struggle."

But, subsequently by the time the tactical line document was prepared, the left-sectarianism of the polit bureau asserted itself completely and it rigidly and unambiguously declared the entire bourgeoisie including the rich peasant to be in the camp of the enemy thus closing all loopholes left in the thesis for any corrective effort in the right direction on this topic.

(b) As a corollary of the above the question of the stage and strategy also remains defined in vague and broad terms. A tendency is revealed even in the political thesis while discussing the stage and strategy to forget the specific nature and tasks of the revolutions in the colonial and semicolonial countries and equate them with those of the revolutions in the independent, capitalist, imperialist countries—brushing aside the distinction. Similarly another tendency is expressed as though the slogan of people's democracy is a slogan which dispenses with definite and different stages of development in the post-second-world-war period. It is sometimes argued as if the democratic and socialist stages get mixed up into a single stage.

Take the following quotation from the *Political Thesis*: “It means the people's democratic revolution has to be achieved for the completion of the task of the democratic revolution and the simultaneous building up of socialism.” This is subsequently interpreted as to mean that both the stages, i.e. democratic and socialist, are mixed and rolled up into one single stage.

(c) In its analysis of the economic changes which have taken place in India during the period of the second world war, and the consequences thereof, the thesis points out how the Indian big bourgeoisie has profited by the war; but from this fact the thesis draws wrong conclusions, conclusions tinted with the wrong understanding based on certain erroneous formulations of Varga and false theories of the Tito agent, Kardelj, such as “India has become a creditor country from a debtor country etc.”—conclusions which have been subsequently trenchantly criticised by Soviet economists and which bear the germs of the discredited ‘decolonisation’ theory. The thesis is tainted with the germs of this wrong understanding because while pointing out how the Indian big bourgeoisie has profited by the war, it at the same time fails to point out the basic fact—to which the above is subordinate—of the onesided colonial character of the Indian industries and their dependence on imperialism and the compradore character of Indian big capital which was acting as the agent of Anglo-American monopoly capital in maintaining India as their colonial base. Not only this, it wrongly tends to

emphasise the independent development of Indian big capital and its 'conflict' with imperialism, its solving these 'conflicts' 'at government level', its gaining some big concessions from imperialism by 'political bargaining', etc.—thus virtually equating the economic status of India with that of the Marshallised countries like France, etc. In its analysis of Indian economic crisis too, the thesis makes concessions to the same wrong understanding as if Indian economy is an independent capitalist economy.

(d) Similarly, while on the one hand making formulations such as "the poorer sections of the landlords are to be given a moderate allowance for a certain period or allowed to retain private land sufficient for their maintenance", on the other the slogan that the "khas lands of the rich peasants must be confiscated without compensation and distributed among toiling peasants" is shoved in in a haphazard manner.

(e) Besides these the thesis does not give any warning against the danger of left-sectarianism.

The polit bureau later developed all the left-sectarian roots contained in the thesis into a full system, nullifying its basically correct formulations.

Curiously enough, some delegates to the second party congress had remarked in the congress discussions that the political thesis is somewhat like Encyclopaedia Britannica, meaning that it is diffused, voluminous and not sharp, etc. Thereupon B. T. Ranadive replied in the following manner : if the central committee was capable of presenting it in a sharp, short resolution, it would have been a great central committee, etc., pleading the necessity and inevitability of such a lengthy thesis. But the subsequent doubts and discussions on the stage, strategy, etc. showed how the diffused, voluminous character had really concealed some serious shortcomings and sometimes in a way self-contradictory formulations too.

In the further discussions it will be shown how these concealed shortcomings revealed themselves later.

Seizing upon these ambiguities in the political thesis a section of the provincial leadership in Andhra, incidentally which had

been in the past consistent upholder of reformist line of the old central committee, curiously enough began to argue that with the Mountbatten award the entire bourgeoisie had got political power, the stage of the revolution was nothing but the October stage, i.e. the socialist dictatorship of workers and poor peasants, and at the present stage the struggle was a struggle against the entire bourgeoisie including the rich peasant. The middle peasant was not to be considered an ally in the democratic front, but only to be neutralised. On further discussion and clarification others withdrew from this stand, but one member of the central committee persisted on the same line. It was impossible to carry conviction to him if we had argued confining ourselves strictly to the letter of the political thesis. It was under these circumstances that the rest of the Andhra provincial committee secretariat, incidentally which had been consistently voicing its opposition to the reformist line of the old central committee since 1944—of course with its own limitations—was called upon to fight this left-deviation. As a matter of fact this swing to left-deviation was not confined merely to a few individuals, but was raising its head as a trend inside the party, in one form or other and in one measure or other. Thereupon a note was drafted by the Andhra secretariat in which clarification and concretisation of the issues in discussion was attempted.

The *Draft Note of the Andhra Secretariat*, made the following basic formulations:

(a) It is wrong to refuse to make basic distinction and differentiation between the revolutions in imperialist countries and the revolutions in colonial and semicolonial countries that suffer from the domination of imperialism. In support of this stand, besides other arguments, it was stated that Russia was an independent feudal-military state whereas India is not independent but only a semicolony.

(b) "The present stage of revolution essentially though not exactly is similar to that of the present stage of Chinese revolution, the stage that opened since 1927 bourgeois offensive against communist and working class".

To bring out a parallel mechanically or try to borrow verbatim strategy adopted for the October stage of the Russian revolution is totally wrong, confusing and misleading.

In this stage of our revolution, our fight is not directed against the "entire capital including the rural rich, kulaks and the profiteers, but only against imperialism, feudalism and the native big collaborationist bourgeoisie".

(c) The middle bourgeoisie may however maintain neutrality or participate in the revolution.

(d) The middle peasant is not to be neutralised in this stage of revolution as some argue on the basis of the analogy of Russian October stage, but to be won over. It is our task to rally the middle peasant to the democratic front and solidly unite with him.

(e) "The offensive launched by the Nehru government against CPI is a part of the international offensive started by world imperialism. It is an offensive by which it ranges itself against all progressive and democratic forces of the world. To put it bluntly this offensive is practically nothing but a cruel civil war let loose by the imperialist-bourgeois-feudal combine against the working class, peasants and other toiling masses. The stage has come wherein even day-to-day partial struggles have to be fought armed or semi-armed. Armed resistance has been forced on the agenda of the revolution by this offensive of the bourgeoisie. Either we resist inch by inch the civil war and offensive let loose against us by all means at the disposal of the people, or allow the bourgeoisie a free hand to crush the forces of revolution and end in the victory of counter-revolution.

"Keeping all this in view, in areas where we are a good proportion in the masses like certain parts of Andhra, Kerala, Bengal, etc. the time has come to think in terms of guerilla warfare (Chinese way) against the military onslaughts of the Nehru government, which is bent on mercilessly liquidating us. Unless with a clear perspective we plan out methods of resistance and if we leave it to spontaneity future history will charge us with gross betrayal of the revolution."

Thus the nature of the civil war and the imminent tasks of organising armed resistance to the brutal offensive of the collaborationist regime are sharply brought out.

(f) The course and the path and the form of the struggle is similar to that of the Chinese, i.e. creation of liberation armies, etc. This is as regards the perspective of our struggle.

The polit bureau came out in its three documents concerning the issues at controversy with a vehement attack and complete condemnation of every point made in the *Andhra Draft Note*. The polit bureau instead of utilising the strong points brought out in the Andhra document seized upon some of its shortcomings and certain oversimplified explanations and formulations and denounced the entire document as containing 'crassest reformism', as 'alarming to the extreme', 'and as an attempt to revise the political thesis' adopted at the second congress. Not satisfied with the rejection of all the main formulations made in the Andhra document, it went full length and made fundamental departure not only from the political thesis but also from all accepted tenets of Marxism-Leninism. And it chose to thrust all these distortions and worst sectarian formulations on the entire party as the supposed authoritative interpretation of the political thesis. In this connection it must be said that the polit bureau by then had sunk so deep in left-deviation that the strong points in the Andhra document, instead of helping it to grapple with realities and making it put these thought-provoking points to sober discussion, only caused it to get 'alarmed to the extreme'.

The force of the style used, the vehemence with which the attacks were delivered, the polemical sallies that were attempted therein, the false pretences that were made to fight reformism, the repeated invocations of the names of the masters of Marxism—Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin—in order to screen its left-adventurist formulations were such that they made the party ranks reel before them and made them shudder. Therefore the ranks could hardly pick up courage to come forward with any criticism of the documents. With all the weight and prestige that the second congress gave the leadership as those in the forefront of the fight against reformism, with the entire party crippled theoretically as a result of the long reformist past, these documents could go down more or less unchallenged in the ranks. Even some of the members of the Andhra secretariat, who could



not agree with these documents dared not frontally attack them in the prevailing atmosphere of all-out political offensive of the polit bureau on these lines. The secretary of the Andhra provincial committee, in his capacity as a member of the polit bureau, had written a letter to the polit bureau expressing differences on some of the basic formulations of the polit bureau documents though they were in the form of doubts, seeking clarification, etc.

This was written on the basis of a series of discussion conducted on these documents inside the Andhra secretariat and in the light of a number of articles that had by then appeared in the international communist press.

This solitary voice of disagreement had no effect on the polit bureau.

Thus the polit bureau which accuses the Andhra secretariat of having attempted to revise the thesis and departed from it, etc., in reality has itself not only revised and made basic departures from the political thesis, but also committed the sin of revising the Communist International documents and all accepted tenets of Marxism-Leninism.

Before we examine these in detail in the main body of the present document, let us analyse in brief the points made out in the polit bureau documents :

(a) The polit bureau's interpretation of the international situation and analysis of the class forces operating therein is subjective and mechanical. The formulation of Zhdanov made at the inauguration of the nine parties' conference, that the world is divided into two camps, etc., has been reduced by the polit bureau practically to mean that in the post-second-world-war period only one contradiction remains, i.e. that between capital and labour and all other principal contradictions of the era of imperialism have receded into the background and are of no or little significance for the strategy and tactics of the proletarian struggle. It is in a way so simplified that the working class and the communist parties can afford to do away with bothering with the various stages of the revolution and the entire world is reduced to such a simple and vulgar division into 'haves and have-nots'. In fact this is how the polit bureau built its entire strategy.

(b) From this erroneous understanding flowed the rest of the blunders.

The polit bureau attempted to fit in every aspect of the problem into this wrong framework. A pseudo-class-analysis was made devoid of all objective reality, and only based on its own wishful thinking.

The accepted Lenin-Stalin formula of distinction and differentiation between revolutions in colonial and semi-colonial countries and revolutions in independent, capitalist, imperialist countries was summarily set aside. Thus the national-liberation aspect of our struggle and the particular task that enjoins upon us are refused to be taken into consideration at all.

To suit its conclusions a pseudo-left theory was invented "that the bourgeoisie acting within the frame-work of the Mountbatten plan has been able to bargain hard and advance its own interests in relation to imperialism", etc. It made the Indian bourgeoisie the spearhead of counter-revolution, thereby screening from the people the imperialists, their domination and their conspiracies. By stating that the Indian bourgeoisie has advanced its position, it has returned objectively in essence to the discredited old reformist stand that Mountbatten award constituted a "national advance".

(c) *Stage and strategy*: It is already pointed out in the foregoing, while examining the shortcomings of the political thesis, how it is vague and confusing about the stage of our revolution. Even after the question was raised on this point, the polit bureau in its document *On People's Democracy* only made the confusion worse confounded. The polit bureau pretended to make an attempt to clarify the Leninist concept that the two revolutions, i.e. the democratic and socialist, are the two links in one chain; but all it did was to play with phrases like 'interlinking', 'interweaving', 'interlacing', 'interwinning', 'delayed democratic revolution ripening into socialist revolution', 'its extreme nearness to socialist revolution', etc. and work itself up to the conclusion that 'it is mixed', thereby meaning that the present stage of revolution is a combination of both the stages of February and October of Russian revolution. This is what the

document *On People's Democracy* says on the point: "It is this mixing, this combination that gives people's democratic revolution in our country. Is the present phase of Indian revolution comparable with the February and the October revolution in Russia? It is neither. It is mixed."

Thus the supposed clarification once again returns to the bankrupt anti-Leninist formulation made in the pamphlet *Opening Report by B.T. Ranadive on the Draft Political Thesis* which reads, thus: "It has been characterised in the document that the struggle for democratic revolution gets intertwined in the struggle for socialism and there can be no two stages of revolution. It is the same type as in Yugoslavia."

Thus the polit bureau had successfully muddled the idea of two links in one chain as to make it into practically 'one link and no chain'.

Naturally, with such a muddled, confused and erroneous outlook on the question of stage, it is impossible that the polit bureau can work out a correct strategy. Here again after the much repeated talk of 'concrete class analysis' the polit bureau brings in its outrageous interpretation of Zhdanov's analysis of the international situation and argues thus:

"Zhdanov in his report on the international situation at the Warsaw nine parties' conference, describes the people's democratic government as a bloc headed by the working class—a bloc of peasants, people, etc. i.e. one in which the bourgeoisie has no place" (*On People's Democracy*).

Having sufficiently distorted and oversimplified Zhdanov on the one hand, and in the name of fight against reformism on the other, the polit bureau fulminated against Mao and the Andhra secretariat, which had quoted Mao in the following words: "The petty-bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie oppressed and injured by this class and its state power, although they too are bourgeoisie, may however participate in the new democratic revolution or maintain neutrality." The polit bureau thus summarily ruled out the possibility of any section of the bourgeoisie becoming an ally of the working class in the people's democratic front at any stage of the people's democratic

revolution. It does not stop there; it goes further. It applies the same rod to the rich peasant and goes hammer and tongs at any suggestion of the anti feudal role of the rich peasants, 'since they too are peasant bourgeoisie!' It makes a demagogic attack on the Andhra secretariat. To quote from the *Tactical Line*: "How can rich peasants, even in the feudal areas, really play an anti feudal role when the entire bourgeoisie wants to compromise and enters into alliance against the masses; when their leader the industrial bourgeoisie has signed a new alliance with feudalism and when consistently fighting against feudal elements creates danger for the rich peasants also at the hands of the masses? How can all this happen when the class antagonism between the exploiters and the exploited had reached such higher proportions?"

Such was the bankrupt manner in which the strategy was worked out by them.

(d) *Agrarian Question*: The polit bureau document *On the Agrarian Question* attempted at a basic revision of the formulation made in the colonial theses of the sixth world congress of the Communist International (hereinafter referred to simply as the colonial thesis of Communist International). Such revision was made by means of a summary statement that "this was two decades ago, before the great capitalist crisis — before the second world war and the economic developments preceding it—two decades before the full effects of the growth of Indian industry despite imperialist obstacles, growth of trade commerce and towns which led to increased commodity production, production for the market in villages could be seen, etc".

The polit bureau attempted at 'new' and 'fundamental' analysis and 'fundamental reestimate of the class relations in the agrarian areas'.

The so-called 'fundamental reestimate' has resulted in nothing but a stupid assertion that the capitalist relations have become dominant though feudal relics in varied form 'still exist'.

The polit bureau takes cudgels against the Andhra secretariat for distinguishing the rich peasant from the capitalist landlord. That to reject this distinction has a number of harmful consequences

is patent to any who had studied the teachings of Lenin and Stalin on this issue.

The polit bureau asserts that the rich peasantry in our country is "able to get out of the shackles of the feudal landlords by the power of money, the power of the exchange relations over feudal relations", and "these well-to-do elements are able to escape the medieval yoke and carry on capitalist exploitation".

Sometimes the wish is father to the thought for our polit bureau. Contrary to the understanding of the Communist International about the objective position and interests of the Indian big bourgeoisie, the polit bureau foolishly puts its faith in the objective potentialities of the collaborationist bourgeois regime to "compel feudalism to reform to its own advantage", "curb feudalism to suit its own interests" and "emancipate the present bourgeoisie" from the clutches of feudalism. While on the one hand it nullifies the real antagonism between feudalism and the rich peasant, and gets extremely touchy when it is pointed out by the Andhra secretariat, on the other it makes a big point on the antagonism between landlords and the Indian big bourgeoisie, whose objective interests in fact are closely bound up together in many respects. In reality what a Marxist has to understand and stress in this connection is the counter-revolutionary alliance of those two sections and not exaggerate their conflicts as the polit bureau does. It is with such a wrong outlook that all the agrarian bills proposed by the Congress government in different provinces are interpreted by the polit bureau and subjective and sectarian conclusions are drawn from them.

Naturally from all the aforesaid comes the prize conclusion that the rich peasantry is not only in the enemy camp but "is one of the main enemies in the rural areas—in fact the spearhead of bourgeois-feudal reaction in rural areas".

Then coming to the question of the middle peasant and his role, it is to be noted that the polit bureau far from debunking sharply the stand taken by some comrades that the middle peasant is to be neutralised in the people's democratic revolution, only provided ample grist to their mill. No doubt the document states that "he (middle peasant) can be won over, there is an important place for him in the alliance, because he is a victim of both feudal

and capitalist exploitation", etc. But often-repeated formulations that precede the above statement such as "there is no doubt that initially his vacillations will be very big: incited by the rich peasants he may be hostile", "his vacillations however are bound to be great", "the middle peasant vacillates most" and "his vacillations will be therefore of the most violent type" etc. overstress the aspect of vacillation without taking into consideration the stage of the revolution. Thus what it does is in effect indirectly to concede the viewpoint of those who advance the slogan of neutralisation of the middle peasant, on the plea that the present fight is a straight fight between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.'

Lastly, the document introduces afresh the slogan of nationalisation of land, citing the authority of the colonial theses of the Communist International. The polit bureau which makes bold to revise the fundamental analysis made in it dogmatically clings to this slogan of nationalisation of land without least bothering itself to put the question why in the East European democracies and in China this slogan was substituted by some other intermediary slogans. Nor does it bother itself with the subsequent clarification by Marxist authorities on this issue. Besides introducing this slogan, the polit bureau advances the queer logic that it will be a rallying and galvanising slogan in the ryotwari areas, whereas in reality these areas of the country prove too tough for this slogan to go down because the principle of private property is more deeprooted among the peasantry when compared with other parts of the country. To cap it all it runs into imaginary fancies that the peasant masses in India "have seen that under present property relations, they have been expropriated", meaning thereby that their consciousness has outgrown the instincts of private property.

(e) *Forms of struggle* : The polit bureau, while on the one hand indulges in big talk about world capitalist crisis, upsurge and revolution, etc., on the other fails to assess properly what all this really means. The nature of the civil war that has been unleashed by the imperialist bourgeois-feudal bloc against the people's forces, the ruthless counter-revolutionary forms of

struggle adopted by it are neither understood nor proper revolutionary forms of struggle attempted to be advanced. The suggestions of the Andhra secretariat, based on the experience of Telangana for a planned partisan warfare are poohpoohed and ridiculed. When the Andhra secretariat says the perspective and the course of the struggle is similar to that of the Chinese, or in other words the 'Chinese path' the polit bureau refuses to see anything new in the Chinese struggle, and learn from it. It doggedly pitches its tent on the set forms of struggle i.e. a general strike and countrywide armed uprising as though the enemy was to allow you to muster and nourish your revolutionary forces as in the days of old. A number of phrases that were hurled into the documents which sound highly revolutionary are in reality nothing but a mere cloak for the opportunist and revisionist theories it invented.

(f) Finally, the polit bureau as consequences of all this faulty and un-Marxian understanding, landed itself in a scandalous attack on Mao, the leader of Chinese Communist Party, which has been successfully leading the mighty people's liberation war of China. It did this because the Andhra secretariat in its *Draft Note* on the clarification of the questions of stage and strategy of our revolution extensively quoted from Mao's pamphlet *New Democracy* and other reports in support of the contention.

This refusal of the polit bureau to learn from the Chinese experience and the outstanding Marxist leaders like Mao, and resorting to vile attacks on Mao, has a number of serious consequences. At a time when the world imperialist press itself was busy putting out slanderous propaganda that he would become an eastern Tito, etc., the sly suggestions of the polit bureau in its documents that his booklet *New Democracy* is not accepted by the Cominform bureau, that Mao's contributions on new democracy belong to the category of revisionist theories of Browder and Tito, and that some of his formulations are reactionary, which no Communist Party will accept, etc., have done immense damage to the cause of the international solidarity of the revolutionary forces. Not only the bourgeois press but other left and pseudo-left press in the country utilised this to

discredit the Communist Party of India and its leadership in the eyes of the people, but the party ranks also were terribly confused and badly miseducated by this. It is no wonder some committees and individual party members began to talk lightly of Mao and Chinese communist literature. It hindered and obstructed the entire party ranks in India from correctly imbibing the invaluable lessons of the Chinese revolution.

This is how the polit bureau has made a precipitous fall from right-reformism to left-adventurism all along the line.

Let us take a bird's-eye view of the way in which the leadership swung from the extreme right to the extreme left.

In the pre-second-congress period the party leadership under P. C. Joshi had practised tailism all along the line. Now in the name of fighting reformism the polit bureau practised left-adventurism. If the right-liquidationism which ignored the independent class role of the proletariat had shelved the question of proletarian hegemony, the present left-sectarianism in the name of proletarian hegemony and socialism has isolated the proletariat and its party from its fighting allies.

Right-reformism with its opportunist interpretation and understanding of the anti-imperialist united national front had sabotaged the agrarian revolution; left-sectarianism with its pseudo-class analysis coupled with extreme slogan sabotaged and disrupted the agrarian struggle and armed resistance in the countryside.

On the question of nationalities, in the right-reformist period, the party leadership had tailed behind communal bourgeois chauvinism which ended in the disruption of the democratic movement. The sectarian polit bureau now in the name of proletarian internationalism and working class unity, advocated the Bukharinite formula that reduced the slogan of self-determination of nations to mere 'self-determination of toilers'. If in the period of reformism our policy ended in supporting Jinnah and his Pakistan slogan, the present sectarian denial of real right of self-determination has only strengthened the hands of reactionary Nehru-Patel government.

Joshian reformism under the slogan of "partial struggles must be fought as partial struggles" preached and practised crude



economism; the sectarian polit bureau under the leadership of Ranadive issued the slogan that "every partial struggle is to be transformed into insurrectionary struggle" and landed in left-adventurism.

Right-reformism derided 'spontaneity' with all its contempt for the masses, always putting organisation and its weaknesses only to sabotage struggles; the left-sectarians began defying spontaneity and in the name of struggles they overlooked, ignored and brushed aside the dire necessity of any organisation. While one negates and liquidates the upsurge in the name of organisation, the other liquidates the organisation with the formula 'crisis, upsurge and revolution' rolled into one.

During the reformist era, it was bureaucracy in the party and the mood of the leadership was: everything to teach and nothing to learn; the party leaders are to say and the ranks are to do. Bureaucracy and anarchy stood at opposite poles with formal democracy in operation. The sectarians starting with the pretension of fighting for democracy, ended in undiluted authoritarian Titoist methods in the name of democratic centralism. Bureaucracy, formal democracy and anarchy of the right-reformist era is substituted by complete nullification of inner-party democracy and establishment of titoite-turkish authoritarianism inside the party.

The old right-reformism reduced the standards of party membership to the mass level, corroding its revolutionary cohesion and fighting capacities. Now, with erroneous left-adventurist policy in operation and failure to convince politically and unify the ranks, it resorts to the magic wand of 'discipline' and disrupts the party. The right-reformist Joshi under the slogan "Function the form efficiently" discouraged the proletarian cadre and promoted untempered petty-bourgeois intellectuals to man the highest positions. The left-sectarian polit bureau catching the correct slogan of "proletarianising the party" vulgarised it and began to drive away cadres on that ground of their 'non-proletarian' origin. In other words, then it was liquidation of that party from the right-reformist end. Now it is liquidation of the party from the left adventurist end.

In those days, under Joshi's leadership the polit bureau attacked the Andhra secretariat branding it as sectarian and left-nationalist, etc., when it pointed out the mistakes in the tactics and policy of the polit bureau on a number of questions. The polit bureau 'criticised' that there was not a 'single socialist intellectual or peasant bolshevik' in the entire Andhra party, and circulated this 'criticism' to all the provincial committees. Now, once, again, under the leadership of Ranadive, the polit bureau attacks the Andhra secretariat as 'crassest reformists,' etc., when once again, the latter pointed out the errors in the strategy and tactics as laid down by the polit bureau, and circulates its 'criticism' not only throughout India but throughout the world.

Thus the right-opportunist Joshi pushed his reformists down the throat of the party in the name of fighting 'sectarianism and left-nationalism'. The sectarians under the leadership of Ranadive pushed their left-adventurism in the name of fighting right-reformism. In reality neither fought the other; indeed, one cannot fight one deviation with another deviation. Both in fact fought against the growth of the revolutionary movement and the party in India.

This is how matters stand in a nutshell.

Right on the heels of the polit bureau documents articles appeared in the *New Times* and from Tass agency written by eminent Marxist writers like Dyakov, Liu Shao-chi, Schneerson and others. Some of the formulations these articles contain basically differ from those made by the polit bureau. These were immediately brought to the notice of the polit bureau and clarification and serious consideration sought from the polit bureau by the secretary of the Andhra provincial committee, who is also a member of the polit bureau. The polit bureau did neither choose to think seriously nor reply. The tenacity and persistence with which the polit bureau stuck to its wrong position can best be understood by the following two instances:

(a) As early as July 1949 an article by Mao on the "Dictatorship of People's Democracy" was published in the organ of the Cominform bureau from which a good many threads for

a correct understanding of our own problems could be picked up. No less a party than the CPSU (B) thought it fit to publish it in a pamphlet form. But the polit bureau chose neither to publish it in its organs nor put it to inner-CC discussion. The general secretary had taken the stand that he was opposed to publishing anything coming from Mao uncritically in our press. This he had clearly stated in his letter to another member of that polit bureau more or less in the same period.

(b) The second glaring instance is as regards the inaugural address of Liu Shao-chi to the Peking conference of the trade unions of Asia and Oceania. Once again the polit bureau had neither thought it fit to publish it nor initiate inner-CC discussion on it. Not only that. It also appears from a reported conversation of a polit bureau member with a delegate from Hyderabad to the Calcutta peace conference that an attempt was made to press all the points Liu Shao-chi has made in his speech into the framework of the polit bureau's erroneous and sectarian formulations.

This attitude of refusal of self-criticism persisted right up to the moment of the appearance of the editorial in the organ of the Cominform bureau (27th January 1950) which directly addressed itself to the strategy and perspective of the Indian revolution, which speaks against the stand of the polit bureau on every basic issue in discussion. After a couple of weeks of its receipt, the general secretary rushes to the press with a statement greeting the editorial. But this too lacks the necessary self-critical approach and satisfies itself by making a mechanical paraphrasing of the editorial.

The statement of the polit bureau assumes to be an attempt on the part of the polit bureau self-critically to examine its mistakes and achievements, etc. A few quotations from the said document are more than enough to demonstrate how the statement in question is rather self-deception than self-criticism.

All that the organ of the Cominform bureau pointed out in its editorial, in the opinion of our polit bureau, is only a 'timely reminder' of the 'lag' in the actual achievements of the Communist Party of India, and not a sharp pull-up and totally alternative strategy and tactics placed before us!

The general secretary's report on the strategy and tactics "has correctly applied on many points the line of the political thesis"! This document which made formulations and advanced strategy which fundamentally revised Marxism-Leninism on almost all basic issues is acclaimed a correct contribution! This document which has topsyturvied the whole of Marxism, which is an embodiment of left deviationist blunders, is acclaimed a document that "correctly applied on many points the line of the political thesis"! Could there be a more atrocious claim than this?

The agrarian document which made pseudo-class analysis and revised the entire Marxist-Leninist understanding on the colonial agrarian question is supposed to have "laid the correct stress" on and "rightly pointed out" a number of issues!

As a climax to all this exhibition of supreme self-confidence—really speaking it is nothing but conceit—comes its claim that its policy of left-deviation in operation has "played a great role in unifying the ranks", etc. Is it not elementary Marxism that real revolutionary unity on Marxism-Leninism cannot be achieved with a left-adventurist policy in operation? Yet the polit bureau is giddy with its supposed successes and woefully fails to assess the damage caused.

Will it not be naive on the part of anybody to expect any genuine self-criticism from the propounders of the left adventurist policy in the party, who have miserably failed to make use of the invaluable international documents that appeared in this period, who arrogate to themselves all knowledge of Marxism and think they have little to learn from the brother parties and who doggedly defended their wrong line all through masquerading it as 100 per cent Marxism?

It is evident how the polit bureau's leadership has steadily marched straight from right-reformism into left-adventurism. With this left-adventurist policy in operation, with persistent refusal to correct itself in the light of both the experience and the international documents, it is not difficult to assess the damage caused to the liberation struggle of India. Of course it is imperative and urgent to examine self-critically the entire work on all fronts of the party during the last two years, without which no genuine turn can be made.

While world imperialism on the one hand is making hectic preparations to turn India into a bastion of reaction in the east

and a jumping off ground to unleash a war on the people's liberation movements and democracies and the Soviet Union, it is highly deplorable that the leadership of the Communist Party of India on the other paralyzes the progress of the revolution and disrupts it with all the discredited anti-Marxist-Leninist pseudo-left theories and practices. The central committee, nay the entire ranks of the party, have to take serious note of these developments and do the needful immediately to set right the malady, rise to the occasion and lead the liberation war in the footsteps of the victorious Soviet people and the Chinese people.

We have seen above in this short introductory note in a general way the nature of the blunders the polit bureau has committed. It would be far incomplete if we do not proceed to detailed discussion and examination of each and every point raised herein.

Here we wish to clarify one point. Reference to the Andhra secretariat and its *Draft Note* is made throughout the present document, because the polit bureau's documents in question are a rejoinder to the *Draft Note* and hence such repeated reference becomes inevitable.

### **Roots Of Left-Sectarianism**

The purpose of the present document, as already indicated in the introduction, is to study self-critically the serious left-deviationist mistakes in our party today. Because of their grave nature, it is necessary to go to the root of the errors and study in detail so that we rectify them easier and quicker.

It is no use satisfying oneself, as our polit bureau does, by saying that here is a small error and there a little gap—an attitude that blurs the Bolshevik outlook on self-criticism, which ought to be merciless. Here is the method and manner of self-criticism given by Lenin:

“The attitude of a political party towards its own mistake is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is, and how it, *in practice* fulfils its obligations towards the *class* and the *toiling masses*. Frankly admitting a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for it, analysing the conditions which led to it and thoroughly discussing the means of correcting it—

that is the earmark of a serious party; that is the way it should perform its duties, that is the way it should educate and train the *class* and then the *masses*. By failing to fulfil this duty, by failing to give the utmost attention, care and consideration to the study of their mistakes, the 'lefts' in Germany (and in Holland) have proved that they are not a *party of the class* but a circle, not a *party of the masses* but a group of intellectuals and of a few workers, who imitate the worst features of intellectualism" (*"Left-Wing" Communism*).

Further, Lenin had occasion to observe "How true it is that a little mistake can always be turned into a monstrous one if it is persisted in, if profound reasons are given for it, and if it is driven to its 'logical conclusion'."

If even little mistakes, once persisted in, will turn into monstrous ones, one can easily imagine how our mistakes, which are not little but monstrous one, already persisted in too long, and still only halfheartedly and formally accepted, will be damaging to the extreme!

It is in keeping with these instructive passages from Lenin that we shall proceed to self-critically discuss our mistakes, etc.

The starting point for a number of deviations on the part of the polit bureau is its mechanical, subjective and sectarian interpretation of Zhdanov's report to the nine parties' conference at Warsaw. The polit bureau documents find fault with the Andhra secretariat for its alleged reformist understanding of the international situation in the post-second-world-war period. While doing so, it seeks support of Zhdanov's analysis of the world situation from his historic report at the nine parties' conference, in which he stated "the more the war recedes into the past, the more distinct become two major trends in post-war international policy corresponding to division of political forces operating in the international arena into two major camps—the imperialist and anti-democratic camp on the one hand and the anti-imperialist and democratic camp on the other."

Let us see from the following how the polit bureau deduces the meaning of the two camps.

The political thesis says: "The old combination in which certain sections of the bourgeoisie and their reformist hangers-on were found in the people's camp in the common battle against fascism is replaced by one in which the entire world bourgeoisie ranged together, with its reformist hangers-on and reactionary supporters, is attempting to blend itself together to stem the tide of revolution and oppose the working class, the people, the socialist Soviet Union, the eastern democracies and the colonial peoples".

Though the formulation that it 'is attempting to blend itself together' leaves room for doubt and different interpretations, the polit bureau, while subsequently amplifying this in its document, the *Tactical Line*, without leaving any room for any doubt, categorically stated that in the present day world no section of the bourgeoisie—whether big, medium, small or peasant, in no country—whether imperialist, independent, capitalist, medium-developed capitalist, colonial or semi-colonial, at no stage of the revolution—whether national-liberationist, democratic or socialist, can have a place in the revolutionary front. This in essence is its interpretation of the formulation of Zhdanov, the 'two major trends' and the 'two major camps'.

Is this Marxian interpretation or gross distortion? It is definitely the latter. Zhdanov's analysis is perfectly correct and clear, and anybody who will not and cannot see the truth of this analysis cannot claim to be a serious Marxist.

After the October Revolution the world is split into two fundamentally hostile camps, i.e. the camp comprising the Soviet Union, the world working class movement and the colonial-liberation movements and opposing it is the camp of world imperialism and its reactionary servitors. Again, during the course of history, particularly during the second world war, there was a temporary alignment of world forces which got divided into two different camps, i.e. the camp of anti-fascism under the hegemony of the Soviet Union, in which certain imperialist states also were compelled to be present for the time being. This anti-fascist camp after the defeat of the fascist camp again got divided into two major trends and two major camps as Zhdanov has

stated. One is at a loss to understand how this pointing of two major trends and two major camps by Zhdanov can be interpreted in the way the polit bureau has done.

Does this mean exclusion of all the other principal contradictions of the era of imperialism—on the basis of which the strategy and tactics are worked out and that out of them only one contradiction, i.e. the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, capital and labour, remains, as our polit bureau sometimes overtly and sometime covertly asserts? Does it mean that all other principal contradictions of the era of imperialism—except the one between capital and labour—the contradictions to talk about which the polit bureau is touchy and likes to call them ‘differences’, etc.—are of no significance for the strategy and tactics of the world proletariat in its struggle for power? Precisely this is what the polit bureau means.

Leaving aside all the rigmarole and the lot of revolutionary phrasemongering phrases such as “the major contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat” “when all the sections are united in organising a world front of capital against labour”, “when all are united in spite of differences”, “the main basic contradictions between the working class and the bourgeoisie”, “the crisis and collaboration intensifying the contradiction between the people and the bourgeoisie hundredfold”, “not reliance on the revolutionary contradiction... between workers and the bourgeoisie”, “how can all this happen when the class antagonism between the exploiters and the exploited had reached such higher proportions” etc., which only sway the gullible and mislead the ignorant, what is the main drive given and conclusion drawn from all the above discourse?

It is simple and plain: In the present phase of the world situation the proletariat has to build its strategy and tactics basing only on one contradiction, i.e. the one between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie: all the other principal contradictions of the era of imperialism are receding and will recede more and more into the background in the face of advancing tide of revolution, which is supposed to intensify the contradiction between capital and labour a hundred times, mitigating the rest of the contradictions. Hence it follows from this that as far as the present



stage and strategy of our struggle is concerned right from the Anglo-American imperialists down to the rich peasant, all are united in a 'solid' counter-revolutionary camp. The polit bureau sees from the mighty growth of world revolutionary forces the growing unity of the world bourgeoisie—imperialist, big, medium, colonial, including the rich peasantry—into a counter-revolutionary bloc, but not the intensification of all the inter-imperialist contradiction and of the contradictions between imperialism and the colonial world, which are of no small significance to the camp of world socialism and democracy.

Here is an extract from a letter, introducing the polit bureau documents (*The Tactical Line. On the Agrarian Questions, On People's Democracy*) written to the Andhra secretariat by a member of the polit bureau, with the approval of the polit bureau. It speaks eloquently of the understanding the polit bureau has on the formulations of Zhdanov:

"The crisis of capitalism and the basic contradiction of the capitalist society, i.e. the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, has so much intensified, the camp of socialism and democracy has so much strengthened and the camp of imperialism so weakened, as a result of the second world war, that the bourgeoisie in every country on a world scale can not now, when the doom of entire capitalist system is within sight, take the conflict among them to the point of certain sections joining the camp of the people for a time as happened in the second world war, but on the other hand, on national and international scale it is uniting itself to avert its impending doom while taking every precaution to keep the conflicts among them within the limits of negotiation and compromise" (C' Rajeswara Rao's letter, December 1948).

This understanding and comprehension of the polit bureau on present day world contradictions has nothing to do with Marxism-Leninism, it is nothing but a base attempt to revise the entire thesis on imperialism by Lenin.

Stalin, in his *Foundations of Leninism* at the very outset, analysing the "Historical Roots of Leninism", states thus.

"Lenin called imperialism 'moribund capitalism'. Why? Because imperialism carries the contradictions of capitalism to their last

bounds, to the extreme limit, beyond which revolution begins. Of these contradictions there are three which must be regarded as the most important.

“The first contradiction is the contradiction between labour and capital...

“The second contradiction is the contradiction among the various financial and imperialist powers in their struggle for sources of raw material, for foreign territory...

“The third contradiction is the contradiction between the handful of ruling ‘civilised’ nations and hundreds of millions of colonial and dependent peoples of the world...

“Such in general are the principal contradictions of imperialism which have converted the old ‘flourishing’ capitalism into ‘moribund’ capitalism”.

Thus it is evident that the three contradictions as described by Stalin are the ‘principal’ ones and ‘most important’ ones. It is sheer nonsense to speak of only one as ‘revolutionary’ and the others as having no bearing on revolution and the one important and the others unimportant.

Again is it a fact that the intensification of the contradiction between labour and capital reduces the other contradictions to insignificance?

Here is what the Communist International and Stalin say regarding such vulgarisation:

“The world coalition of capital is unstable, internally corroded, but armed to the teeth, is confronted by a single world coalition of labour. Thus, as a result of the first round of imperialist wars, a new fundamental antagonism has arisen of world historical scope and significance; the antagonism between the USSR and the capitalist world...

“Thus the system of world imperialism, and with it the partial stabilisation of capitalism, is being corroded from various causes: First, the antagonism and conflicts between the imperialist states, second, the rising for the struggle of the vast masses in the colonial countries, third, the action of the revolutionary proletariat in the imperialist home countries and

lastly, the leadership exercised over the whole revolutionary movement by the proletarian dictatorship in the USSR. The international revolution is developing" (*Programme of the Communist International*).

Stalin, while dealing with the topic of "The October Revolution as the Beginning of and the Groundwork for the World Revolution" in his book *Problems of Leninism* states thus: "If we add to this the fact that not only defeated countries and colonies are being exploited by the victorious countries, but that some of the victorious countries have fallen into the orbit of financial exploitation at the hands of the most powerful of the victorious countries, America and England; that the contradictions among all these countries are an extremely important factor in the disintegration of world imperialism; that, in addition to these contradictions, very profound contradictions exist and are developing within each of these countries; that all these contradictions are becoming more profound and more acute because of the existence, alongside of these countries, of the great Republic of Soviets—if all this is taken into consideration, then the picture of the international situation will become more or less complete".

We can best understand the importance of all these contradictions to the cause of the world proletariat if we recall the stern admonition Stalin gives to one of the comrades who had underestimated the importance of these contradictions. This is what Stalin says:

"I have just been handed a note in which a reply to Chicherin's article is requested. Comrades, I consider that these articles of Chicherin which I have read carefully are nothing but literature. They contain four errors or misconceptions. Firstly, Chicherin is inclined to deny the existence of contradictions between the imperialist states, to exaggerate the international unanimity of the imperialists and to overlook and underrate the internal contradictions between imperialist groups and states (France, America, Great Britain, Japan, etc.), contradictions which do exist and give rise to war. He has exaggerated the factor of unanimity of the imperialist rulers and has minimised the force

of the contradictions that exist within this trust. Yet these contradictions do exist, and it is on them that the activities of the people's commissariat of foreign affairs are based... The whole purpose of the existence of the people's commissariat of foreign affairs is to take account of these contradictions, to use them as a basis and to manoeuvre within these contradictions" ("Report on the Immediate Tasks of the Party in Connection with the National Problem").

When we find that our polit bureau has committed the same mistake, i.e. of overrating the unanimity of the entire world bourgeoisie and underrating the significance of its contradictions and conflicts, and this in the name of Zhdanov, the enormity of the crime of the polit bureau stands out in bold relief.

Here one word of caution is necessary. In the foregoing, we have attempted to expose the bankruptcy and anti-Leninist character of the polit bureau understanding which reduced to nought all other contradictions except the one between capital and labour. But this criticism of ours should not be taken to mean that all contradictions therefore are of equal significance and there is no such thing as the main contradiction and subsidiary contradictions. Such an understanding also would run counter to Lenin-Stalin teaching on imperialism and dialectical materialism.

To be clear, in the present historical period the contradiction between the capitalist world and the world of socialism continues to be the main and the deepest contradiction: this contradiction today is expressed sharply by the fact that the two great imperialist powers America and Britain are openly calling for a war by preparing for it, against the Soviet Union and the people's democracies of both east and west.

The antagonism or contradiction in the capitalist camp is undoubtedly of subordinate importance compared with the fundamental world antagonism, i.e. the contradiction between the world of socialism and the world of capitalism. To forget this fact is to lead oneself into right-opportunist deviation.

While it is so, it should be noted that in the present day world, "of various contradictions existing in the capitalist camp, the

contradiction between American capitalism and the British capitalism has become the main contradiction”.

Although this antagonism in the capitalist camp is of subsidiary importance compared with the fundamental contradiction between the world of socialism and the world of capitalism, the proletariat cannot afford to maintain neutral attitude towards this struggle in the capitalist camp. The proletariat will, and must, utilise these contradictions. But it determines its concrete approach basing on the magnitude, intensity and nature of these contradictions as they evolve and undergo change in that process.

The above gives the guide for a correct concrete understanding based on dialectical materialism. It enables us to see sharper the bankruptcy of the polit bureau understanding—that the accentuation of the main contradiction, that between capital and labour, between socialism and imperialism, mitigates and reduces to nought all the other contradictions.

So that no room may be left to doubt that precisely this is the understanding of the polit bureau on the international situation and that of the ‘two camps’, and that this is the starting-point of a number of mistakes it has committed the following can be cited.

In its *Draft Note* the Andhra secretariat had made the following two formulations with reference to the international situation after the second world war:

“(a) Imperialism after the two world wars has been so weakened as we find it today that the nature of its warring camps has been ended. Today, there is only the mighty colossal American imperialism” etc.

“(b) American imperialism faced with unheard of crisis is bent upon not only keeping colonies and semi-colonies under its domination but steadily advancing step by step to reduce other independent and capitalist states as its colonies. This parasitic feature of rapidly devouring the weaker sections of its own species has a tremendous bearing on the course of the present-day world,” etc.

Before we go to examine these formulations, it must be stated that the fact the Andhra secretariat deals with the topic of

international situation in a small para goes to show that the intention and purpose of the secretariat was not to sit for a detailed examination of the international situation, but only in passing to point out the mighty growth of American imperialism after the second world war and consequent intensification of the contradictions and conflicts in the world bourgeois camp. However briefly it may have been dealt, it makes formulation which are nevertheless serious in their nature and deserve careful attention and examination.

Especially the first formulation that “the feature of its warring camps had ended”, practically approximates to the formulations of Varga, which are subjected to scathing criticism and condemnation by the CPSU(B) in the following words:

“Comrade Varga considers that there is very little probability of an armed conflict in the future between the imperialist countries. Certainly, we cannot foretell the concrete forms which the contradictions in the imperialist camp will take in the more or less immediate future. But it would be a gross error to underestimate the importance of these contradictions and their inevitable sharpening in connection with the striving of American enslavement of the countries of Western Europe.

“We must for this reason, decisively reject the attempt which Comrade Varga makes to revise the fundamental thesis of the Leninist-Stalinist theory of imperialism as to the inevitability of wars between the imperialist powers arising from the sharpening of the unequal economic and political development of capitalism in the period of imperialism and the general crisis of capitalism” (*Communist*, July 1949).

The polit bureau which subjects the *Draft Note of the Andhra Secretariat* to microscopic examination and attacks almost every basic formulation it has made and the points it has raised—of course often the correct ones too—has curiously enough not a word to say against this gross reformist formulation. That it has kept silent on this and acquiesced in it is not accidental.

The polit bureau, instead of attacking this dangerous reformist formulation of the Andhra secretariat, concentrates its fire on the other correct part of the secretariat’s formulation in which it

is stated that American imperialism's striving for world markets and world domination "has a tremendous bearing on the course of the present-day world", etc.

This idea of intensification of inter-capitalist or inter-imperialist contradictions is subjected to ridicule, calling it "supposed to have tremendous bearing", a "sham-faced theory of class collaboration", "reliance on and basic reliance at that on the increased competition among the bourgeoisie", and as an "attempt to tie the proletariat to the apron-strings of the bourgeoisie", etc.

In this connection it must be said that the accusing statement of the polit bureau that the Andhra secretariat is taking up the position of "exclusion of the contradictions between the people and imperialism, between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie" and "reliance on and basic reliance at that on the inter-capitalist contradictions", etc., is completely incorrect and devoid of facts and only an oversimplification in its polemical zeal to put the opposition in the wrong and score a point for its line of argument.

The polit bureau as a matter of fact is so touchy at the very mention of inner-capitalist contradictions or antagonisms, to characterise them as contradictions, that it only uses the term 'differences', etc., which do not fully reveal the seriousness of the steadily intensifying conflicts and their objective basis. In the very next sentence it chooses to nullify even the significance of this term 'difference' by shoving in another phrase that "whatever differences that might exist among different sections of the bourgeoisie, etc."

Thus it refused to base itself on the analysis and thesis of imperialism by Lenin. Nay, it works out the above quoted erroneous formulations of Varga to its logical end and is guilty of revising the basic tenets of Lenin's *Imperialism*.

Our self-critical examination and discussion on this aspect will be however incomplete without quoting in full the relevant passages from Lenin's *Imperialism*. Then only everyone of us will be able to understand how the revision has taken place and how to combat it. This revision is in the nature of and owes its origin to, the discredited theory of 'ultraimperialism' by

**Kautsky**—though Kautsky made it to draw different conclusions of his own.

To quote Lenin:

“International cartels show to what point capitalist monopolies have developed and they reveal the object of the struggle between the various capitalist groups. This last circumstance is the most important; it alone shows us the historic-economic significance of events; for the forms of struggle may and do constantly change in accordance with varying, relatively particular and temporary causes, but the essence of the struggle, its class content cannot change while classes exist. It is easy to understand for example, that it is in the interests of the German bourgeoisie, whose theoretical arguments have now been adopted by Kautsky (we will deal with this later) to obscure the content of the present economic struggle (the division of the world) and to emphasise this or that form of struggle... In order to understand what takes place, it is necessary to know what questions are settled by this change of forces. The question as to whether these changes are ‘purely’ economic or non-economic (e.g. military) is a secondary one, which does not in the least affect the fundamental view on the latest epoch of capitalism. To substitute for the question of content of the struggle and agreements between capitalist combines the question of the form of these struggles and agreements (today peaceful, tomorrow warlike, the next day warlike again) is to sing to the role of sophists.”

“We ask, is it ‘conceivable’ assuming that the capitalist system remains intact—and this is precisely the assumption that Kautsky does make—that such alliances would be more than temporary, that they would eliminate friction, conflicts and struggles in all and every possible form?”

“Therefore in the realities of the capitalist system and not in the banal philistine fantasies of English persons, or of the German ‘Marxist’, Kautsky, ‘interimperialist’ or ‘ultraimperialist’ alliances, no matter what form they may assume, whether of one imperialist coalition against another, or of a general alliance embracing all the imperialist powers, are inevitably nothing more than a ‘truce’ in periods between war. Peaceful alliances prepare



the ground for wars, and in their turn grow out of wars; the one is the condition for the other, giving rise to alternate forms of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle out of one and the same basis of imperialist connections and the relations between world economies and world politics.”

This is how one has to understand the contradictions of the era of imperialism and not in the way the polit bureau does.

The secretary of the Andhra provincial committee, after a round of discussion of the polit bureau documents in the Andhra secretariat, and on the appearance of some articles in the international Marxist press, addressed a letter to the polit bureau bringing this error to its notice. Here are the relevant passages from the letter:

“While I was with you it was only the Chinese documents which were making distinction between big business and small bourgeois sections. But, after I came here, a number of articles were published in the organ of the information bureau of nine parties... *American Political Affairs*, the *New Times*, even our central organ, which go to show that it is not only the Chinese party but several other parties also are making such a distinction. This also confused all of us, including myself. Though all the secretariat comrades are not of the same opinion with regard to the question whether it is permissible to make such distinction among bourgeois class in India, they agree on one point. That is, the interpretation we have given to Zhdanov’s report on this point is not in common with that of communist parties of several other countries and Cominform.

“...I only mean this that the interpretation which we have given to Zhdanov on this point that in no country in the world can any section of the bourgeoisie be neutralised or won over is not accepted by several other communist parties.”

It must be made very clear that we do not uphold all the points raised in this letter as correct ones in their entirety. Nonetheless the salient point in discussion here has been brought to the notice of the polit bureau as early as May 1947 (in fact it was written on 28th February 1949).

The polit bureau had neither considered it worth discussing all these months, nor even as late as February 1950 when it sat

to discuss self-critically its entire political line after the appearance of the editorial article in the organ of the Cominform bureau, was this taken note of.

One does not find even a single word of reference to this colossal blunder, to this crime of revisionism in the polit bureau's statement on the editorial wherein it says it "attempts to place mistakes of the polit bureau..." before the ranks. It is exactly on this aspect that Lenin warns that "the attitude of a political party towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it in practice fulfils its obligations towards its class and the toiling masses". Is the polit bureau's attitude in this respect in line with this? Undoubtedly not.

Does not the claim of the polit bureau to have read and understood Zhdanov's report become false when once it chooses to poohpooh and nullify the significance of the striving of American imperialism for the monopoly of world markets and the consequent intensification of the inner-imperialist and inner-capitalist contradictions? What does Zhdanov's report drive at? In fact, it is a clarion call to mobilise all the anti-fascist anti-imperialist democratic forces the world over to resist the aggressive designs of American imperialism. See the few following quotations from Zhdanov's report:

"Thus the new policy of the United States is designed to consolidate its monopoly position and reduce its capitalist partners to a state of subordination and dependence on America."

"With an eye to the impending economic crisis, the United States is in a hurry to find new monopoly spheres of capital investment and market for its goods. American economic 'assistance' pursues the broad aim of bringing Europe into bondage of American capital. The more drastic the economic situation of a country is, the harsher are the terms which the American monopolists endeavour to dictate to it.

"But economic control logically leads to political subjugation to American imperialism."

Zhdanov while drawing attention to the fact that American imperialism is more and more assuming the role of fascist aggressor observes thus:

“The frankly expansionist programme of the United States is therefore highly reminiscent of the reckless programme, which failed so ignominiously, of the fascist aggressors, who as we know also made a bid for world supremacy.

“Just as the hitlerites, when they were making their preparations for political aggression, adopted the camouflage of anti-communism in order to make it possible to oppress and enslave all peoples, and primarily and chiefly their own people. America’s present ruling circles mask their expansionist policy, and even their offensive against the vital interests of the weaker imperialist rival, Great Britain, by fictitious considerations of defence against communism.”

What conclusions has been drawn from all this? Not that inner-capitalist and inner-imperialist contradictions dwindle into insignificance in the post-second-world-war period, but their intensification. To quote:

“It should be noted that the American variant of the western bloc is bound to encounter serious resistance even in countries already so dependent on the United States as Britain and France. The prospect of the restoration of German imperialism, as an effective force capable of opposing democracy and communism in Europe, cannot be very alluring either to Britain or France. Here we have one of the major contradictions within the Anglo-American-French bloc.”

This needs no further elaboration. Further, look at the special task Zhdanov formulates for the communist parties of Great Britain, France and Italy, etc.

“A special task devolves on fraternal communist parties of France, Italy, Great Britain and other countries. They must take up the standard in defence of the national independence and sovereignty of their countries. If the communist parties firmly stick to their position, if they do not allow themselves to be intimidated and blackmailed, if they act as courageous sentinels of enduring peace and popular democracy, of the national sovereignty, liberty and independence of their countries, if in their struggle against the attempts to economically and politically enthrall their countries, they are able to take the lead of all the

forces prepared to uphold national independence no plans for the enthralment of Europe can possibly succeed."

Such are the tasks for countries like great Britain and France that highlight the significance of the American expansionism. But the polit bureau ridicules this as "supposed to have a tremendous bearing on the course of the present-day world", when the *Draft Note of the Andhra Secretariat* makes the following formulation :

"The crisis of world imperialism can be best seen when we observe the present Truman's American expansionism. American imperialism faced with the unheard of crisis is bent upon not only keeping colonies and semi-colonies under its domination but steadily advancing step by step to reduce other independent capitalist states as its colonies. The parasitic feature of rapidly devouring the weaker sections of its own species has a tremendous bearing on the course of the present-day world. Monopoly capitalism today has been so naked an enemy not only of socialist democracy but also of 'bourgeois democracy'. It is out not only to destroy the toiling and working masses, but also devour a section of its own class, the small bourgeoisie. Thus in the present-day international background, we find imperialism in its last stages caught in the grip of a crisis so deep, so extensive and unheard of."

The aggressive designs of American imperialism are of such an alarming nature as to endanger the independence and national sovereignty of countries such as Britain and France too, which by themselves are imperialist states. Then is it not patent that it applies with greater force to India—essentially a colony—and the task of national liberation becomes all the more significant for our revolutionary struggle? It is unquestionably so. It is this already existing grip of British imperialism on India and the increasing penetration of American capital that signify the essentially colonial status of India. Precisely because of this position a possibility of a broad anti-imperialist united front comprising of workers, all peasantry and even the middle bourgeoisie exists. But the polit bureau refuses to see this truth and, mark you, it does this in the name of Zhdanov.

## **“Theory” Of Collaborationist Bourgeoisie Advancing Vis-a-Vis Imperialism Using Mountbatten Award**

We have seen so far how the polit bureau hopelessly bungled on the analysis of the international situation, how it thoroughly distorted the formulations of Zhdanov and nullified the significance of the world contradictions, simplifying them to a single contradiction of the world bourgeoisie versus the proletariat.

Now in this chapter we will proceed to discuss how the polit bureau revises the understanding of the Mountbatten award as given in the political thesis and plunges headlong into the position of clean ignoring and bypassing the national-liberation aspect of our struggle: how the logic of the polit bureau does not end here and goes further to summarily reject the accepted Leninist-Stalinist principle of fundamental distinction between the colonial and semi-colonial countries on the one hand and the independent, capitalist, imperialist countries on the other.

The political thesis adopted by the second party congress analyses the Mountbatten award and the consequent tasks.

Every aspect of the analysis is absolutely correct, except the use of the ambiguous term ‘bourgeoisie’ with regard to collaboration, which may mean either big bourgeoisie or the entire bourgeoisie, as the polit bureau subsequently chose to interpret.

Has the polit bureau stuck to this basic analysis? That it evidently did not can be proved from the quotations from the *Tactical Line* and other polit bureau documents.

The polit bureau at one stroke turned upside down the whole analysis of the Mountbatten award as made out in the thesis. Whereas in the political thesis the award is characterised as “not really signifying the retreat of imperialism but its cunning counter-offensive”, in the tactical line the collaborationist “bourgeoisie, acting within the framework of the Mountbatten plan, has been able to bargain and advance its own interest” vis-a-vis imperialism.

While in the political thesis the collaborationist bourgeoisie is described as the ‘junior partner’, which had shared power, in the imperialist-feudal-bourgeois combine, in the tactical line it

has become the most fighting active partner and leading force in the combine.

Thus it is the polit bureau which revised the political thesis and not the Andhra secretariat as is alleged by the polit bureau. It is the polit bureau with its discovery of the discredited theory (that the collaborationist bourgeoisie has advanced its position bargaining within the framework of the Mountbatten plan) "that has taken the party back to the 'Mountbatten resolution' (which characterised the Mountbatten award as national advance) and repudiated the line adopted by the second congress", and not the Andhra secretariat as the polit bureau alleges.

Finally, it shifted its position from the earlier formulation where we have to conduct fight "not only in opposition to imperialism but in opposition to the bourgeoisie also" to the new position of fight "not only in opposition to the bourgeoisie but in opposition to imperialism also". The former roles of imperialism and the collaborationist bourgeoisie, as indicated in the thesis are reversed in the tactical line.

Further, imperialism is said to have forgotten one point i.e. the people and hoped to keep the princes as its reserves. This discovery of 'forgetfulness' of imperialists is simply amusing to any student of Marxism. Are the British imperialist, who are the most experienced and cunning lot among the world imperialists, so naive as to forget this and dream of keeping the princes as their 'independent reserves' for long as against the collaborationist bourgeoisie? It is sheer common sense that once the Indian collaborationist bourgeoisie is given a share in the state power and is allowed to handle the state machine, with huge armies at its disposal, it is simply unimaginable for the princely hirelings to think that they can survive without the direct assistance and support of, and without collaborating with the new India government. Imperialism is neither so naive as to forget this patent fact, nor, for the matter of that, has it forgotten it at all. The conspiracy of the imperialists which culminated in the *Mountbatten award* had been, besides weakening the Indian liberation movement by partitioning India, to leave as many thorns as possible in the side of the new India government, so

that it is further weakened to such an extent as to extract total surrender to imperialist dictators. Such thorns have been the numerous 'princely states' that are left formally independent throughout India.

Let us take the most typical of them, i.e. Kashmir and Hyderabad. In both these cases imperialists successfully utilised and are utilising the weakness of the Indian collaborators to compel them to abject surrender on every major issue—national and international. It is this surrender which is to be observed on the issue of the sterling balances; the alignment on the various questions in the UNO and open subservience to the imperialists, acquiescence in the Atlantic pact, the issue of the atom bomb; the tying down of India to the war-chariot of the British Commonwealth, of sending Gurkhas to Malay, on the question of the South African Indians, and the political economic military collaboration with imperialists against Southeast Asian colonial liberation struggles; dropping of the question of nationalisation of industries, of giving constitutional guarantees for protection of foreign capital in the country, etc.

Instead of observing all this surrender of the Indian collaborationist government, of position after position to the imperialists, the polit bureau sees in all this only 'bargaining hard' and 'advancing its interests' vis-a-vis imperialism! Instead of seeing the steadily tightening grip of the tentacles of the British imperialist octopus, and of the American imperialist in addition, the polit bureau sees only that "the bourgeoisie has not only improved its position in relation to feudal elements but also in relation to imperialism"!

It is not difficult to see what political conclusions can be drawn from such analysis and formulations. It is to counteract that strategy suggested by those who argue on the basis that '15th August independence' has not changed basically the colonial position of India, etc. and to advance a strategy under the assumption that India is practically 'decolonised' after 15 August 1947.

After delivering a long lecture and advancing all types of ingenious arguments and having relegated successfully

imperialism and its enslaving role into the background, the polit bureau comes forth with two propositions in the section "Dependence and Slavery to Imperialism."

First of all we would like to ask the polit bureau—do these two causes they have advanced, viz seeking imperialist protection for fear of people's revolution and dependence on imperialism for capital goods, really reveal the present real status of India or hide it? Is it not in a way arguing to equate the satellite nature of India with that of any independent capitalist country like France, etc., which is also dependent on American Marshall 'aid'? Is it not exactly basing on this pseudo and sham analysis that the polit bureau subsequently landed in refusing to make any differentiation between the revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries and independent, capitalist, imperialist countries?

The following quotations reveal how the analysis made by the polit bureau conceals the full and real face of imperialism in India.

Lenin says in his "Preliminary Draft Thesis on the National and Colonial Questions" for the second congress of the Communist International:

"Sixth, that it is necessary constantly to explain and expose among the broadest masses of the toilers of all countries, and particularly of the backward countries, the deception systematically practised by the imperialist powers in creating under the guise of politically independent states, states which are wholly dependent upon them economically, financially and militarily; under modern international condition there is no salvation for dependent and weak nation except in a union of Soviet Republics".

The polit bureau chose not to explain and expose constantly among the broadest masses the deception of the imperialist powers as enjoined by Lenin, but the reverse of it. It was only busy 'discovering' points to show collaborationist bourgeoisie could make 'advances' and make imperialism 'retreat'.

It is based on the above rich analysis of Lenin that Soviet writers like Zhukov, Alexeyev and others analysed the "15th



August independence" of India conferred on us by British labour-imperialists.

Instead of making an objective analysis of the situation at least by making use of these documents, instead of pointing out the continued basically colonial nature of India and driving home this point as it ought to, the polit bureau only finds that India has become a 'national state': a 'satellite state'! Instead of seeing the crying and basic causes that continue to keep India in the grip of imperialism, the polit bureau only sees two other causes—the collaborationist bourgeoisie's fear of the rising popular revolution and its need for capital goods—causes that only scratch the surface of the problem, causes that fail to present the full, complete picture; worse, causes that taken by themselves in reality only hide and screen the concrete factor of British imperialism, the leading counter-revolutionary force in the combine, in the forefront, naturally relegates the anti-imperialist aspect of our struggle to a general plane—a worldwide plane—with high-sounding phrases like 'not from this or that imperialism only', etc.

Thus the anti-British imperialist aspect of our struggle is brushed aside as of no special significance to the present stage of our struggle. Thus the national-liberationist aspect of our struggle is clean ignored criminally. Thus the polit bureau succeeded in essence in equating colonial and semi-colonial India with any independent, capitalist, imperialist country in the world today (e.g. France, etc.) which for fear of class revolution in their countries and for financial help depend upon American imperialism and become its satellites. Thus the polit bureau, in its polemical zeal to combat the supposed deviation that 'nothing has changed', landed itself in the position that 'everything has changed', but for the general tie-up of the Indian reactionary government to world imperialism—a position of Indian collaborationist bourgeoisie 'advancing its interest' by 'hard bargaining' with imperialism within the 'framework of Mountbatten plan', a position that is tantamount to the discredited 'decolonisation' thesis.

It is no surprise that once the polit bureau got bogged in this position it obliterated and differentiation between the revolutions

in colonial and semi-colonial countries and in independent, capitalist, imperialist countries—differentiation which is an accepted Marxist dictum.

In this connection it is necessary to show how the Andhra secretariat, in its note, had brought forth this point before the polit bureau and how the polit bureau had rejected it. Let us quote from the *Draft Note of the Andhra Secretariat*:

“Secondly, Russia was an independent feudal military state, with peculiar features of industrial growth... Compared with what is described above India in its real sense is not independent and essentially it remains a colony, though after 15th August, with bourgeois collaboration, it can be defined as a semi-colony. In a word, Russia was more near to advanced capitalist countries, whereas presentday India is a rotten colonial base.”

“The bourgeois-democratic revolution is, in the main, yet to be completed. Our country is not an independent capitalist state but only a semi-colony. Hence our revolution is in the main an agrarian revolution; not the agrarian revolution of the old type under bourgeois leadership, but agrarian revolution of a new type under proletarian leadership. Hence correctly classified as new democratic revolution.”

“The national and international background for October Revolution is totally and radically different from that of our present revolution. Hence the drawing of parallel or attempts at borrowing of strategy verbatim are wrong, misleading and disruptive.”

“Thus we see a completely different national and international set-up is present today when compared with October Revolution, warranting us a completely reorientated approach in defining the present stage and strategy of our revolution. It is a wonder how comrades can gloss over the difference between the independent bourgeois state and semicolonial state. Is it not surprising not to find any difference between a ‘new class’ taking hold of state power after the February revolution and a new class sharing power with imperialism, smashing nothing but got everything of the old machine intact? Is it not fantastic to argue that the slogan of democratic revolution advanced in our political

thesis is nothing different from the slogan of socialist dictatorship of proletariat and poor peasantry on the eve of the October Revolution? So the comparison of the present stage of our revolution with the stage of October Revolution is not only wrong but misleading in very many respects. This deviation must be at once corrected or else we fail to effectively advance towards democratic revolution."

We must remember here that the secretariat had to advance the above arguments against those comrades who sought to nullify the difference between the present stage of our revolution and the October Revolution, by talking loosely that the Nehru government is a Kerensky government etc.

To be clear, it must be stated that we do not uphold one and all the above arguments of the Andhra secretariat as entirely correct. The main point, however, is the stress on the differentiation of the revolution in an independent country and in a colonial country, which is sufficiently made.

The polit bureau, instead of utilising the strong point made therein, seizes upon some somewhat wrong arguments and some incorrect ones too, and attacks the entire thing conveniently bypasses the crucial point.

The polit bureau has in the *Tactical Line* said enough to nullify the differentiation between India and tsarist Russia, to equate what is a colonial country with an independent imperialist country. By bringing in the 'clever' phrase 'experience of Russian revolution', the polit bureau neither can escape its guilt of equating the status of the two, i.e. the present day India and tsarist Russia, nor can it succeed in its totally unwarranted suggestion that the Andhra secretariat is against imbibing the 'experience of Russian revolution'. As a matter of fact, the issue of the controversy has been whether it is permissible to ignore the differentiation between the revolution in colonial and semicolonial countries on the one hand and in independent and imperialist countries on the other, and whether it is correct to compare the present stage of Indian revolution to the October stage and borrow the strategy verbatim. The polit bureau after delivering severe admonitions to the Andhra secretariat for having attempted such differentiation goes headlong to quote

a passage from the *History of the CPSU (B)* to 'prove' that pre-revolutionary Russia was as backward as India is today.

The conclusion drawn by the polit bureau from citing the passage is wrong in two respects. Firstly, pre-revolutionary Russia may be spoken as 'backward' when compared with the advanced west, but it is wrong to say that it was as backward as India is. Secondly, this equating is being done to fight against those who advance arguments for differentiation, thus strengthening the former arguments which nullified the differentiation. Here is a passage from Stalin's *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question* ("China") characterising this type of deviation as trotskyist and nothing else:

"What is the fundamental position from which the Comintern and the communist parties generally approach the problems of the revolutionary movement in colonial and dependent countries?"

"It is a strict *differentiation* between revolution in imperialist countries, countries that oppress other peoples, and revolution in colonial and dependent countries, countries that suffer from the imperialist oppression of other states. Revolution in imperialist countries is one thing: in those countries the bourgeoisie is the oppressor of other peoples; it is counter-revolutionary in all stages of the revolution, the national elements, as an element in the struggle for emancipation, is absent in these countries. Revolution in colonial and dependent countries is another thing; in these countries the oppression exercised by the imperialism of other states is one of the factors of revolution; the oppression cannot but affect the national bourgeoisie also; the national bourgeoisie, at a certain stage and for a certain period, may support the revolutionary movements of its country against imperialism, and the national element, as an element in the struggle for emancipation, is a revolutionary factor. Not to make the differentiation, not to understand this difference and to identify revolution in imperialist countries with revolution in colonial countries, is to depart from the road of Marxism, from the road of Leninism, and adopt the road of those who support the Second International.

“This is what Lenin said on the subject in his report on the national and colonial question at the second congress of the Comintern:

‘What is the *most important and fundamental* idea of our theses? It is the *distinction* between *oppressed* and *oppressor* peoples. We emphasise this distinction, unlike the Second International and bourgeois-democrats.’

“The fundamental mistake of the opposition is that they do not understand and will not admit this difference between the one type of revolution and the other type of revolution.

“The fundamental mistake of the opposition is that they *identify* the 1905 revolution in Russia, an imperialist country, which oppressed other peoples, with the revolution in China, an oppressed country, a semicolonial country, which is forced to resist the imperialist oppression of other states.

“With us in Russia, in 1905, the revolution was directed against the bourgeoisie, against the liberal bourgeoisie, in spite of the fact that it was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Why? Because the liberal bourgeoisie of an *imperialist* country is bound to be counter-revolutionary. And that is why the Bolsheviks at that time did not and could not consider temporary blocs and agreements with the liberal bourgeoisie. On these grounds, the opposition assert that the same attitude should be adopted in China in all stages of the revolutionary movement, and that temporary agreements and blocs with the national bourgeoisie in China are impermissible at all times and under all circumstances. But the opposition forget that only people who do not understand and will not admit that there is a difference between revolution in oppressed countries and revolution in oppressor countries can talk like this, that only people forsaking Leninism and joining the followers of the Second International can talk like this.”

We have discussed above the nature and gravity of the mistakes in the documents of the polit bureau—how they, starting with relegating the aspect of imperialist oppression and enslavement into the background, ended with clean bypassing the national-liberationist aspect of our struggle and nullifying

the distinction between revolution in independent imperialist countries and revolution in colonial and dependent countries. It is no wonder that once one commits the blunder of ignoring the fact that imperialism grips India 'octopus-like', one cannot but drift further and commit the rest of the consequent errors which in their nature are very serious and grave.

This mistake of underrating the significance of imperialist grip had been brought to the notice of the polit bureau as early as 2 May 1949, in a letter by C. Rajeswara Rao.

He writes:

"(b) Secondly, it is said in the thesis that imperialism is the leading force in the combine and that the bourgeoisie 'is granted a share in the state power' not full power; and that the combine is described as a 'new line-up of imperialism, princes, landlords and the bourgeoisie' (note the order). 'In a new state, therefore, the national bourgeoisie shares power with imperialism, with the latter still dominating indirectly.' Now, the *Tactical Line* says that the Indian bourgeoisie is the 'fighting partner and leading force in the combine', that 'the bourgeoisie has not only improved its position in relation to feudal elements, but also in relation to imperialism' and that 'in the bargaining between imperialism and the bourgeoisie, the feudal princes act as the allies of the bourgeoisie, i. e. as its satellites'. Of course in the end it is also said that 'the bourgeoisie is tied to the imperialists'. Taking the thing as a whole, the impression is that the bourgeoisic has strengthened its position 'in relation to imperialism', and has transferred itself from a secondary force into a leading force in the combine, acting within the framework of compromise when the leading economic and political strings are kept in the hands of imperialism. This is a very big political departure from the thesis, which has to be recognised."

Again explaining the discussion on the point elsewhere in the same letter, he writes:

"(f) Has the Indian bourgeoisie strengthened itself in relation to imperialism? The Secretariat comrades (P.Sundarayya could not participate in discussion on this point) feel that the formulation in the document *Tactical Line* that 'bourgeoisie has

not only improved its position in relation to feudal elements, but also in relation to imperialism' is wrong, though it is qualified later by saying that 'it is still tied to imperialism'. This leads to the wrong understanding of underestimating the daily tightening grip of not only British imperialism but of American monopolists also, (it is to be noted that India has already taken a loan of 90 million dollars and is going to take more—Matthai's budget speech), and consequent blunting of the edge of exposure of the aggressive designs of Anglo-American imperialists to make India their reactionary warbase."

Besides this a number of articles by Soviet and other communist writers had appeared in the press, where this aspect of imperialist grip on India is specially stressed. Then why did the polit bureau refuse to reconsider its position and stick to its guns till the time of the editorial in the organ of the Cominform bureau?

Why does the polit bureau even after being pulled up by the Cominform bureau try to explain it away in its latest document as though it is a small error which crept in while 'combating the reformists, who maintained nothing has changed'?

Well, they 'combated the reformists'! Very well, they 'correctly unmasked' the sham independence! Only a small mistake of 'failure to underline' the grip of imperialist has 'led to two serious errors'! Anyway we are asked to believe so.

In this connection it is also necessary to clear another point that has arisen here. Is it a fact that someone has said that nothing has changed subsequent to the Mountbatten award? In the entire document of *Tactical Line* the polit bureau cites no other instance except on what is alleged to have been said by the Andhra secretariat. Has the Andhra secretariat said so? Nowhere has it said so. It was only in one connection the following was stated by the Andhra secretariat in the *Draft Note*, "whereas in the presentday India, by the Mountbatten award and subsequent so-called National government, nothing has been smashed of the imperialist-feudal state machinery, but simply got political power shared by the dominant bourgeoisie. It is not the entire capitalist class that gets benefited by this compromise but only the big

business houses that have entered into deals with the British capitalists. Not to speak of the toiling masses, the middle bourgeoisie will also be devoured as the economic crisis deepens”.

First of all, what is exactly said here is “nothing has been smashed”, and not “nothing has been changed”. This distortion, though it looks small, a mere little change of a word, is a dangerous one.

Secondly, the statement “nothing has been smashed” in the given context is perfectly correct.

It is unimaginable how the polit bureau out of this could create the ghost of the formulation “nothing has been changed” and conduct a ‘heroic’ fight, and land itself in the position that “everything has changed”, i.e. the British imperialists’ grip on, and the colonial status of India, etc.

Is it not audacious on the part of the polit bureau to thrust this formulation in the mouth of the Andhra secretariat? Is it not a fact that the Andhra secretariat was complemented openly in the second party congress for having fought against the reformist politics and stand of those who took the position of “nothing has been changed”? Is it not by recognising this contribution of Andhra secretariat that B.T. Ranadive, while introducing the panel for the central committee in the second congress, had remarked: “I have nothing to add about the Andhra comrades. My only grievance is that they have not fought enough and more doggedly”? And is it not simply unimaginable that the Andhra secretariat, which has been consistently voicing its opposition since 1944 to the reformist policies and practice of our old central committee could plunge headlong into the grossest reformist formulation that “nothing has changed”, hardly one month after the second congress (the Andhra secretariat’s *Draft Note* was prepared in April 1948)!

Yet the polit bureau chooses to characterise the Andhra secretariat so. Something is very seriously wrong somewhere. It is not only a failure to subject one’s own mistakes to ruthless self-criticism, but also a very dangerous way of reading and interpreting inner-party documents prepared by others. The central committee must take note of this. As the great Lenin says:



“Not he is wise who makes no mistakes. There are no such men nor can there be. He is wise who makes not very serious mistakes and who knows how to correct them easily and quickly”.

The pity is that our polit bureau has made very serious mistakes and yet does not know how to correct them.

### **Stage, Strategy And The Slogan Of People's Democracy**

We have already pointed out in the introduction to this draft how the political thesis has been conveniently vague and confusing with regard to the stage of our revolution. The thesis says, “It means that the people’s democratic revolution has to be achieved for the completion of the tasks of democratic revolution and the simultaneous building up of socialism”.

That this conception of the precise stage and strategy is not merely vague but wrong can be proved by the following statements of the authors of the draft theses, statements made both during and after the second congress.

“It has been characterised in this document that the struggle for democratic revolution gets intertwined with the struggle for socialism and there can be no two stages of revolution. It is the same type as in Yugoslavia. That is our aim. That is, there is no conception that the bourgeois-democratic revolution must be built first and then the socialist revolution and in between something else will happen. It is one single revolution, based upon the broad class-alliance of the workers, peasants, the toiling middle class and the progressive intelligentsia. That constitutes the class-alliance of this revolution which begins by ending all the old remnants of the old feudal order and straightforwardly goes towards the building up and establishment of socialism” (Bhowani Sen’s speech in the second party congress, printed in the pamphlet *Opening Reports by Comrade B.T.Ranadive and Comrade Bhowani Sen on the Draft Political Thesis*).

“On behalf of the central committee it was made clear that a people’s democratic state itself meant the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was also stated that in the present phase of the general crisis of capitalism after the second world war, a people’s democratic state represents a specific form of class alliance led

by the proletariat and becomes the instrument of completing not only the people's democratic revolution but also carrying it forward to the achievement of socialism" (*Review of the Second Congress*).

Is it not ideological bankruptcy to say that "there can be no two stages of revolution"? Is it permissible to say categorically "that a people's democratic state itself meant the dictatorship of the proletariat", without understanding the different stages and their different peculiarities? Is it any wonder that certain comrades start arguing on the basis of this that our revolution is basically socialist, though as a byproduct it has to fulfil a lot of democratic tasks? Is it not exactly against such arguments the Andhra secretariat is compelled to fight? Is it not in this connection that the Andhra secretariat quoted extensively from Mao, from his pamphlet *New Democracy*, wherein Mao had to fight out 'all-in-one-stroke' slogan-mongers in the Chinese Communist Party? Was it not against this attempt of the Andhra secretariat that the polit bureau took up cudgels against the Andhra secretariat and Mao?

Before we elaborate all these points let us take up the question of confusing the stages. Does Marxism-Leninism allow this muddling up of the stages? Let us see what Lenin and Stalin had said on this:

"But as a matter of fact when he (i.e. Lenin) criticised the tactics of the Mensheviks, he at the same time exposed the tactics of international opportunism; and when he substantiated the Marxist tactics in the period of bourgeois revolution and drew the distinction between bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution, he at the same time formulated the fundamental principles of the Marxist tactics in the period of transition from the bourgeois revolution to the socialist revolution" (*History of the CPSU-B*).

In the book *Two Tactics* there are innumerable statements of Lenin insisting on the distinction between the two stages of revolution, i.e. democratic and socialist. Let us quote some of them :

"To confuse the petty-bourgeois struggle for a complete democratic revolution with the proletarian struggle for socialist

revolution spells political bankruptcy for a socialist. Marx's warning to this effect is quite justified. But it is for this very reason that the slogan 'revolutionary communes' is erroneous, because the very mistake committed by the communes that have existed in history is that they confused the democratic revolution with the socialist revolution".

"On the other hand, two totally dissimilar questions are confounded, viz. the question of our participation in one of the stages of the *democratic* revolution and the question of the *socialist* revolution. Indeed, the 'conquest of power' by social-democracy is a socialist revolution, nor can it be anything else if we use these words in their direct and usually accepted sense. If, however, we are to understand these words to mean the conquest of power for a democratic revolution and not for a socialist revolution, then what is the point in talking not only about participation in a provisional revolutionary government but also about the 'conquest of power' *in general*. Obviously our 'conferencers' were not very clear themselves as to what they should talk about: the democratic or the socialist revolution".

"He (the conferencer) will not be able to tell him (a worker) that this (Paris Commune) was the name given to a workers' government that once existed, which was unable to and could not at that time distinguish between the elements of democratic revolution and those of a socialist revolution which confused the tasks of fighting for a republic with those of fighting for socialism ..... Does this not reveal the very mistake which they unsuccessfully tried to accuse us of having committed, i.e. confusing a democratic revolution, with a socialist revolution, between which none of the 'communes' could differentiate?"

"We all draw a distinction between bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution, we will absolutely insist on the necessity of drawing a strict line between them; but can it be denied that in history individual, particular elements of one revolution and the other become interwoven? Have there not been a number of socialist movements and attempts at establishing socialism in the period of democratic revolution in Europe? And will not the future socialist revolution in Europe still have to do a great deal that has been left undone in the field of democracy?"

Stalin while fighting the deviations of the opposition in the CPSU(B), when they were found distorting the directions of the Communist International and Lenin regarding the Chinese revolution, observed :

“Now as to the stages of the Chinese revolution. The opposition have got themselves so entangled that they are denying that there are any stages whatsoever in the development of the Chinese revolution. But were there ever revolutions without certain stages of development? Did not our revolution have its stages of development? Take Lenin’s ‘April Theses’ and you will see that Lenin discerned two stages in our revolution: the first stage was the bourgeois-democratic revolution, with the agrarian movement as its main axis; the second stage was the October Revolution with the seizure of power by the proletariat as its main axis. What are the stages in the Chinese revolution? In my opinion there should be three: the first stage was the revolution of the general national united front, the Canton period, when the revolution was striking chiefly at foreign imperialism, and the national bourgeoisie supported the revolutionary movement; the second stage is the bourgeois-democratic revolution, after the national troops reached the Yangtse river, when the national bourgeoisie deserted the revolution and the agrarian movement grew into a mighty revolution of tens of millions of peasants (the Chinese revolution is at present in the second stage of its development); the third stage is the Soviet revolution, which has not yet come about but which will come about. Whoever does not understand that there are no revolutions without definite stages of development, whoever does not understand that there are three stages in the development of the Chinese revolution, understands nothing either of Marxism or of the Chinese question.”

These quotations cited from Lenin and Stalin amply go to prove that the position taken by our polit bureau, expressed through the extract from Bhowani Sen’s speech referred to above, is definitely wrong and constitutes fundamental departure from Marxism-Leninism. Firstly, the polit bureau ignores and brushes aside Lenin’s dictum “We all draw a distinction between

bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution, we will absolutely insist on the necessity of drawing a strict line between them ....” This is the first departure.

Secondly, by making such an oversimplified statement as that "there are no two stages of revolution", etc. It attempts to dispense with the necessity of stages in our revolution. This is the second fundamental departure.

Thirdly, by stating "That constitutes the class-alliance of this revolution (workers, peasants, etc.), which begins by ending all the remnants of old feudal order and straightforwardly goes towards the building up and establishment of socialism", it attempts to dispense with the necessity of two separate class-alliances for the two stages of the revolution. In a word, it visualises the same class-alliance both for democratic and socialist stages. This constitutes, in our opinion, another fundamental departure from the Leninist-Stalinist conception of democratic revolution passing into socialist revolution.

Let us see what Lenin says on this point:

"First with the 'whole' of the peasantry against the monarchy, against the landlords, against the medieval regime (and to that extent, the revolution remains bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic). Then with the poorest peasants, with the semiproletarians, with all the exploited, against capitalism including the rural rich, the kulaks, the profiteers, and to that extent the revolution becomes a socialist one" (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*).

Or, the same in other words of Lenin:

"At the head of the whole people, and particularly of the peasantry—for complete freedom for consistent democratic revolution, for a republic! At the head of all the toilers and the exploited—for socialism" (*Two Tactics*).

Such is the Leninist conception of stages and alliances.

But, as we have already observed, the polit bureau made a departure from all this which has a number of serious consequences.

Firstly, it leads to the failure to understand in concrete the classes and sections which are interested in democracy and to

utilise the reserves in full in the onward march of the struggle of the proletariat for proletarian dictatorship and socialism.

Further, it lands in the deviation, as some are already suffering from, that in the 'present world setup' and in accordance with that, in our country, the classes and sections which are interested in socialism are the only classes that are interested in democracy. That is to say, the class alliance that is necessary for, and is capable of, effecting socialist revolution is alone capable of fighting for people's democratic revolution and none else.

Secondly, it leads to the dangerous illusion that all the classes and sections in the alliance for the people's democratic revolution would continue to be allies for the stage of socialist transformation also. This would screen new class struggle that would open up with the end of the first stage of people's democratic revolution and the beginning of socialist transformation and hence would take the proletariat unawares.

It is against this Lenin warns thus:

"The success of the peasant uprising, the victory of the democratic revolution will but clear the way for a genuine and decisive struggle for socialism on the basis of a democratic republic. In this struggle the peasantry as a landowning class will play the same treacherous, vacillating part as is being played at present by the bourgeoisie in the struggle for democracy. To forget this is to forget socialism, to deceive oneself and others as to the real interests and tasks of the proletariat" (*Two Tactics*).

Is not the significance of this warning all the greater in our case where besides all the peasantry even some sections of the bourgeoisie also may remain in the people's democratic alliance?

In other words, the hegemony of the proletariat in the people's democratic revolution is wrongly considered to be enough to build complete socialism without steadily advancing to the full dictatorship of the proletariat.

Now let us come to another equally significant formulation made in the *Review of the Second Congress* that "a people's democratic state itself meant the dictatorship of the proletariat".

Does not this loose formulation lead to wrong conclusions, particularly in relation to the slogan we have advanced for the present stage of our revolution in India i.e. the people's

democratic revolution? Does not this give scope for certain elements to argue that what we are immediately striving for is the dictatorship of the proletariat? Is it not a fact basing on such slipshod formulation that some began to equate the present stage of our revolution to the stage of October Revolution ? That it is so can be seen from the following :

“In a nutshell, my position is that the present stage of the Indian revolution corresponds broadly to the second stage of the Russian revolution, i.e. after February revolution; but leading to October .... But yet the present stage of the Indian revolution corresponds to the second stage of Russian revolution” (P. Sundarayya’s note to the polit bureau on the Andhra Secretariat’s *Draft Note*).

Leaving aside fuller discussion of this issue for a while, which we will take up subsequently let us assert in brief the meaning of the concept of people’s democracy.

The concept of people’s democracy implies basically two things: Firstly, the proletarian hegemony, and secondly, its transitional character of passing through different stages to realise the full dictatorship of the proletariat.

It is also necessary to recognise the fact of the distinctive features which distinguish the people’s democracies of Central and Eastern Europe from the people’s democracies of colonial and semi-colonial countries.

Further, the concept of people’s democracy does not preclude the possibility of alliance with certain sections of the bourgeoisie at a certain stage, whereas in the Leninist concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the proletariat and its party do not and cannot share power with any other class.

How clumsy it would look to equate loosely people’s democratic state with that of the dictatorship of the proletariat as was done in the abovequoted passage of the polit bureau can be seen from the following observation of Stalin :

“The hegemony of the proletariat was the embryo of, and the transitional stage to, the dictatorship of the proletariat” (*Foundations of Leninism*).

It was against the background of the confusion created by the polit bureau and confronted with the acute stage of the

Telangana struggle and its problems like the constitution and composition of the village committees, etc.—where by then itself in nearly 2500 villages people's administration was set up—that the Andhra secretariat was called upon to discuss anew this question of stage and strategy. Thus it is evident that it is not in the nature either of mere academic interest or of general enthusiasm for abstract discussion that the problem was taken up again soon after the second party congress.

It is also evident, as is already shown that confining to the letter of the thesis, which is vague, ambiguous, etc. it is difficult to clarify the issue.

The Andhra secretariat took up the position against the slogan of October stage thus: "India like China is semi-colonial and semi-feudal in character. Like that of Chinese feudal war-lords, our states and feudal princes remain to be liquidated as sores on the face of our country. Like the Chinese bourgeoisie of 1927, Indian bourgeoisie has, at the present, almost started a civil war by its cruel attack on all democratic forces of the country, headed by the working class and the Communist Party. The Indian bourgeoisie, afraid of the growing revolutionary forces, went under the wings of foreign imperialism to obey its dictates. There in China the fruits of the revolution were harvested by the national bourgeoisie, whereas in India the fruits of sixty years of national movement have been harvested by the Indian bourgeoisie, by sharing political power with imperialism. Here, as in China, the bourgeoisie has left intact the feudal allies, which it wants to utilise in the course of its counter-revolution.

"The offensive launched by the Nehru government against the Communist Party of India is part of the international offensive started by world imperialism. It is an offensive by which it ranges itself against all progressive and democratic forces of the world. To put it bluntly, this offensive is practically nothing but a cruel civil war let loose by the imperialist-bourgeois-feudal combine against working class, peasants, and other toiling masses....

"This is the picture present before us which says that India is essentially a colonial country in all its social political and economic aspects. Hence the stage of our revolution is also



essentially bourgeois-democratic; but it is not a bourgeois-democratic revolution of the old type but of a new type led by the proletariat and correctly called new democratic revolution. This is also expressed in the term people's democratic revolution. The present stage of our revolution essentially, though not exactly, is similar to that of the present stage of Chinese revolution, the stage that opened since 1927 bourgeois offensive against communists and working class. Though Chinese comrades have fought for more than 20 years and grown in quality and quantity, the stage remains yet the same to be fulfilled. Further we, in India, have, almost like that of Chinese democratic forces in the post-1927 period, entered into a definite stage. Of course, the present radically changed international background will greatly help us and ease our task when compared to Chinese brethren who had a prolonged period of twenty years and more of tortuous civil war, and yet have to complete it victoriously" (*Draft Note of the Andhra secretariat*).

How does the polit bureau read and clarify this?

The *Tactical Line* says "Both Nageswara Rao (Sundarayya) and the secretariat have turned Marxism upside down .... The secretariat decided it is the stage of February revolution, since it does not want to fight the rich peasant—nothing has changed—only big business gone over, new democratic revolution carried as only anti-feudal, etc. Nageswara Rao imagines another set of relations".

The polit bureau does not stop here. It ridicules the entire thing and brands "both make a mockery of Marxism". who have "turned Marxism upside down".

Now, coming to the issue, is it factually correct as the polit bureau asserts that the "Secretariat decided it is the stage of February revolution"? Do not the passages from the Andhra secretariat's *Draft Note* quoted above prove just the opposite? How shall we characterise this except as wanton distortion on the part of the polit bureau? Yet it did it and circulated it among the entire party ranks and the public in India and also abroad.

Coming to the question of the present stage and strategy, the Andhra Secretariat insisted upon adopting the line of the pamphlet

*New Democracy* by Mao, with necessary modifications if any. The secretariat quoted in its document extensively from Mao in support of its line (the Andhra secretariat's *Draft Note* consisted of hardly 18 pages half foolscap and out of these nearly five pages were occupied by quotations from Mao).

How does the polit bureau sum up the stand of the Andhra secretariat?

Firstly, by a ridiculous shifting of position. We have seen just above how the Andhra secretariat is alleged to have said, the present stage of our revolution is the February stage. Wonderfully enough, in the same breath it is stated that the secretariat has said it is a new democratic stage!

Secondly, is it a fact that, as the polit bureau alleges, "the class content however is not defined", meaning thereby that the content of the class-alliance of new democratic revolution is not defined? The following quotations from the *Draft Note of the Andhra Secretariat* are a crying proof how baseless the polit bureau allegation is :

"The first stage of the revolution in colonial and semicolonial countries—though according to its social nature—is fundamentally still a bourgeois-democratic one of which the above requirements still basically call for a clearance of the way of capitalist development—yet despite this the revolution is no longer the old wholesale bourgeois revolution for the building up of a capitalist society and a state of bourgeois dictatorship type; but a new type of revolution wholly or partly led by the proletariat, the first stage of which aims at setting up of a new democratic society, a new state of the combined dictatorship of all revolutionary classes. The fundamental character of this revolution will never vary until the arrival of the stage of socialist revolution though during its progress, it may pass through several minor stages in accordance with the possible changes in the attitude of enemies and alliances".

Continuing further the note says :

"To put it more concretely, let us quote Mao's analysis where he discusses the classes in the democratic front.

"Who form the revolutionary democratic groups?

“The workers are of course the most thorough revolutionary democrats. Besides the workers the peasants form the largest revolutionary democratic group.

“All peasants with the exception of those rich farmers unable to shake off their tails of feudalism, are taken by the slogan of land to the tiller.

“The lower middle class in cities and towns is another revolutionary democratic group because the development of agricultural productivity made possible by the policy of land to the tiller benefits them.

“The upper middle class forms a vacillating group. It favours land to the tiller because it too wants a market. But, at the same time, they fear the policy because they own land..

“Who are the sworn enemies of revolution?

“Those who are resolutely opposed to the policy are the groups within the Kuomintang who represent the class of big landlords and big business and compradores”.

“Mao further elaborating on this issue in his latest report to the central committee of the Communist Party of China has formulated clearly in describing the enemies of the Chinese revolution, and says :

“The monopoly capital merged with state capital becomes state-monopoly capitalism. This monopoly capitalism intimately merged with foreign imperialism and domestic landlord class and old type rich peasant becomes compradore feudal state-monopoly capitalism. This is the economic foundation of Chiang’s reactionary regime. This state -monopoly capitalism not only oppresses the workers and the peasants but also oppresses the petty-bourgeoisie and injures the middle bourgeoisie.

“The petty-bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie oppressed and injured by this class and its state power, although they too are bourgeoisie, may however participate in the new democratic revolution or maintain neutrality. They have no connections or comparatively fewer connections with imperialism. They are real national bourgeoisie. Wherever the state power of new democracy exists, these classes must firmly and unhesitatingly be protected.

“Petty-bourgeoisie mentioned here refers to the small-scale industrial and commercial capitalists who hire workers and shop employees.

“The existence and development of middle capital elements here, under these conditions, are not all dangerous. The same applies to the new rich peasant economy which will necessarily come into being in the rural areas after the agrarian revolution.

“The new democratic revolution is to eliminate only feudalism and monopoly capitalism, only the landlord class and bureaucratic bourgeoisie (big bourgeoisie), not capitalism in general and not middle bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie”.

“Again Mao, in the same report positively asserts the strategy of new democratic revolution in more definite and more concrete terms”.

“Our line is to rely on poor peasants and solidly unite with the middle peasants (not as some of our comrades say ‘neutralise them’!) to destroy feudal and semi-feudal exploitation system of the landlord class and the old type rich peasants.

“In the demarcation of class composition, care must be taken not to commit the mistake of assigning those who are really middle peasants to the rich peasant category.

“All these are concrete policies that must be adopted by our party in carrying out the strategic task of solidly uniting the middle peasants”.

In another passage, the same is further elaborated thus:

“The basic principles must be noted here. First, it is necessary to satisfy the demands of poor peasants and farm labourers—this is the important task of our agrarian reform. Secondly, it is necessary to resolutely unite middle peasants and not injure the basic principles, and the task of our agrarian reform will surely be triumphantly completed. In accordance with the principle of equal distribution, the surplus land and the portion of the properties of the old type rich peasants should be taken over for distribution. Because Chinese rich peasants, in general, are of heavy feudal and semi-feudal exploiting nature—rich peasants at the same time collect rents and engage in usury and their conditions of hiring labour are semi-feudal.

“..... There should in general be differentiation between the rich peasants and the landlords”.

Talking of the class alliance in India, the *Draft Note* says:

“By the compromise with the imperialism it is not the entire capitalist class which gets benefited, but only the few big

business(elements) which have got into economic deals with British financiers. Let alone the toiling masses, the middle bourgeoisie and the rich peasantry, who have no feudal tails, will also be ground down by the imperialist-feudal-big business combine.

“This is the basis for the widest possible front against the above anti-national and anti-people combine. The front must be based firmly on the workers, poor peasants and agricultural labourers with middle peasants and town petty-bourgeoisie as allies. The middle bourgeoisie and rich peasants (without feudal tails) who vacillate between the people and the anti-national combine have to be neutralised as a class. However, certain sections of the rich peasantry may participate in the revolution, though vacillating, in the areas where feudal landlords are all-powerful, dominating over rich peasants also, for example Telangana and Rayalaseema”.

Do not these series of quotations cited above clearly, sharply and concretely define the class content of the new democratic stage? Yet all this does not make any sense to our polit bureau. Otherwise, how can it accuse us and assert that “class content is not however defined”? It is for the readers to understand and the polit bureau to explain. Still more amazing is the fact that in the very next sentences and in the very same breath, the polit bureau says it is defined, but the objection, as it says, “insofar as the new democracy is defined it is done so from opportunist quotation from Mao..” It goes without saying that this does not hold water in the face of the preponderant evidence that the Andhra secretariat’s *Draft Note* has quoted everything and left nothing of all Mao has said concerning the stage and strategy in his book *New Democracy* and the cited report.

But then, we ask the polit bureau one question. Instead of utilising and quoting the passages that clearly define and state the class content of new democratic stage and that were given extensively in the Andhra secretariat *Draft Note*, why does the polit bureau choose to quote just a mutilated phrase of four words (viz “dictatorship of many classes”) and accuse the secretariat of the crime of opportunist quotation from Mao? Whose opportunism is it? Indeed, the boot is on the other leg!

After having hurled a lot of statements against the formulations in the Andhra secretariat's *Draft Note* concerning stage and strategy, such as "the secretariat decided that it is the stage of February", that it "is supposed to be new democratic", that its "class content however is not defined", and that in so far as it is defined "it is done from opportunist quotation of Mao", etc., the polit bureau rejected the position of the Andhra secretariat and issued the document *People's Democracy* afresh

Before we go into detailed examination of this document, we have to point out one thing; that it does not settle accounts with the erroneous formulations made earlier on the issue, those made in Bhowani Sen's speech, and in the *Review of the Congress*, both earlier referred to; i.e. the document nowhere states whether it continues the earlier pronouncements or makes a departure from them. Thus the party ranks are left in doubt.

The document *On People's Democracy* starts on a good premise that democratic and socialist stages are two links in one chain—the Leninist conception. The document cites very illuminating and pertinent quotations from Lenin and Stalin on the issue. But by pretending to apply these principles to the concrete situation, both in the world of today and India, the polit bureau completely departed from the Leninist concept, two links in one chain, and landed in the original position of one stage revolution.

It worked itself up to this position with phrases like 'interlinking', 'intertwining', 'interweaving', 'interlacing', 'delayed democratic revolution', 'ripening into socialist revolution', 'extreme nearness to socialist revolution', 'the same combination that brings about the proletarian revolution', and arriving at the conclusion that 'it (i.e. the stage of revolution) is mixed', meaning that the present stage of our revolution is a combination of both February and October (i.e. democratic and socialist) stages of the Russian revolution.

Thus, at one stroke, the interlinking conception becomes 'mixed' conception, i.e. back to the old mutton.

The polit bureau may point out to the following quotation and try to refute the above :

“It is not October—because, though we are eliminating the political rule of the bourgeoisie, we are not able to raise the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat immediately—because the intermediate strata, parties, classes have not yet exhausted their full possibilities, and therefore a block with them cannot be ruled out” (*On People's Democracy*).

We are of opinion that this is formal. It does neither reveal the mind of the polit bureau correctly nor is it the conclusion that emerges from the entire logic of the polit bureau, worked out in this and the other documents of the polit bureau. A volume of evidence can be cited to substantiate our contention.

Now let us examine it in detail.

Firstly, the document says: “One warning is necessary ... of the correlation of forces as it exists” (*On People's Democracy*).

What does this convey? Does it not convey a wishful thought of skipping the democratic stage by a miracle? Even in the case of Russian revolution was it not a fact that the Bolsheviks could advance to the slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat only after the dictatorship of workers and peasants was realised, though of course not in the way the Bolshevik Party had visualised but in a different way, in the form of dual power?

Here is what Lenin says:

“The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has already been realised, but in an extremely original form, and with a number of highly important modifications” (“Letters on Tactics—First Letter”)

Does it not reveal that the Bolsheviks could advance to the slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat only after realising the democratic stage, and not ‘straight’ as our polit bureau wishfully thinks?

The warning of the polit bureau only goes to strengthen the ‘mixed’ conception and its confusion.

Secondly, the document says:

“What place does fight against imperialism occupy ... breaking away from the capitalist system” (*On People's Democracy*)

Do not the phrases the fight ‘is to be carried on at a different level’, ‘freedom from world capitalist order - not from this or

that imperialism only', water down the anti-imperialist, national-liberationist, democratic character of the revolution, which stand in one measure or other has its own influence on the character of the stage of the revolution? Is it pardonable on the part of the polit bureau to clean ignore mentioning even a word in the concrete of British imperialism, and talk in a diffused general way like 'different level', 'world capitalist order', etc.? Is it not in tune with the ultra left phrasemongers who advance the slogan of socialist revolution, clean skipping the democratic stage? We feel it is.

Thirdly, is it not a fact that when the Andhra secretariat quoted Mao in its *Draft Note*, in order to refute the 'all-in-one-stroke' theorists, the polit bureau denounced it as erecting a Chinese wall, etc.?

Here is the passage from Mao, quoted by the Andhra secretariat, and taken exception to by the polit bureau:

"Though it goes without saying that the first step of the revolution which we are contemplating today will one day inevitably develop into second step, i.e. socialism and only in this realm of socialism can China become prosperous : Yet the present is no time to practice it. Socialism is out of the question before the tasks of the present revolution, the tasks of anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism are fulfilled. The Chinese revolution can only be achieved in two stages: (a) new democracy; (b) socialism. And we should point out that the period over which the first step will expand will be a considerably long one. We are not idealists. We cannot place ideals over and above present-day life.

"It is correct then today that this stage of which the first should form the groundwork of the second must not be interrupted by a stage of bourgeois dictatorship. This alone is the proper Marxist method of understanding the course of development of our revolution. It is to suffer from worst illusions to assent to the suggestion that the democratic stage of the revolution has not its own specific tasks and time-table and it is possible to accomplish in one stage the task which belongs to an entirely different stage; for instance, to try to accomplish the task of socialist stage simultaneously with that of the democratic. Such is the face of



this 'all-in-one-stroke' which is pure idealism. It is not the proper way in which any revolutionary could think. It is known to everybody that both in the field of ultimate forms of social organisation and in the matter of practical working programme, the Communist Party has developed its outlook. That is, it has got a maximum and minimum programme. The new democracies of the present and socialism of the future are its two component parts to be carried out under the guidance of the whole ideology of communism."

How did the polit bureau attack this clarification of Mao on the Leninist principle of insistence on and distinction of stages? It called it 'erecting a Chinese wall.'

The political bureau does this despite the fact that the Andhra secretariat states specifically that "No Chinese wall can be erected between the new democratic and socialist stages of the revolution. The toilers having once achieved power under the leadership of the proletariat, will proceed to socialism 'peacefully' and without the necessity of another insurrection."

Does not the rejection of all this by the polit bureau amount to the position of 'all-in-one-stroke' theories, i.e. in our case, the 'mixed' one stage theories? We hold so.

Lastly, has not the polit bureau taken up the position that the present stage of our revolution is a struggle which constitutes the fight against entire capital, including the rich peasantry? Is not this position characterised by Lenin as indicative of socialist stage, thus: "then, with the poorest peasants, with semi-proletarians, with all the exploited, against capitalism, including the rural rich, the kulaks, the profiteers, and to that extent the revolution becomes a socialist one"?

The polit bureau says everything that strictly concerns the socialist stage and socialist strategy and yet calls it people's democratic stage and strategy! Is it not sheer self-deception? Does not the position of the polit bureau coincide with those who advance the slogan of socialist revolution, however much it may say "It is not October because..."etc.? We think it does.

We have discussed enough to show how even the polit bureau's document, *On People's Democracy*, instead of clearing the

confusion has only added to it; how, instead of correcting the previous erroneous formulations on this issue (Bhowani Sen's speech) etc., it has only continued it, despite the fact that it is supposed to be a clarification anew.

However we feel that the discussion on this topic will be far from complete without going into the allegation that Mao, by his definition of the new democratic dictatorship as the "united dictatorship of all anti-imperialist classes", etc. has confused the precise slogan of dictatorship of workers and peasants. There are very many suggestions in the polit bureau's document, *Tactical Line*, to this effect. But in the covering note to the documents of the polit bureau, which was written in December 1948 by C. Rajeswara Rao with the approval of the polit bureau, this attack on Mao was much more clear and open.

The covering note says:

"There is nothing more that Mao has added 'to the armoury of Marxism' in the matter of theoretical formulations, than what Lenin, Stalin or the Communist International have already said about the colonial revolutions: but, on the other hand, he has confused the precise and pregnant formulations made by the above-mentioned by his loose and at times wrong formulations about new democracy and in other documents."

"(2) The provincial committee secretariat draft talks about Russia being 'more near to an advanced capitalist country' than India attaining the status of a 'semi-colony' after the bourgeois compromise. Hence it draws the conclusion that the lessons of the Russian revolution do not so much apply to us at the present stage of our revolution as that of the Chinese revolution. It takes the loose and some erroneous formulations of Mao like 'dictatorship of the revolutionary classes', 'new democratic revolution being mainly against feudalism', 'the middle bourgeoisie to be neutralised, etc., and mechanically applies to our revolution'".

All this is said to prove only one thing, i.e. the slogan of the dictatorship of workers and peasants is Leninist and clarification of it as 'united dictatorship of all anti-imperialist classes' is anti-Leninist and reformist. Is it a fact? A closer examination of the

issue, how Lenin arrived at this slogan and what it implies, will prove that it is not a fact.

Lenin arrived at this slogan, dictatorship of workers and peasants, basing on the slogan of Marx, who analysing the democratic revolution of 1848 in Germany, advanced the slogan of people's dictatorship. Lenin explains in his *Two tactics* this aspect in a sufficiently elaborate manner. To quote from Lenin:

"In Marx's opinion, the National Assembly should have 'eliminated from the regime actually existing in Germany everything that contradicted the principle of sovereignty of the people', then it should have 'consolidated the revolutionary ground on which it rested in order to make the sovereignty of the people, won by revolution, secure against all attacks'.

"Thus the tasks which Marx set before the revolutionary government or dictatorship in 1848 amounted in substance above all to a democratic revolution, viz defence against counter-revolution and the actual elimination of everything that militated against the sovereignty of the people. And this is no other than a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship.

"To proceed: which classes, in Marx's opinion, could and should have achieved this task (actually to exercise to the end the principle of sovereignty of the people and to beat off the attacks of counter-revolution)? Marx speaks of the 'people'. But we know he always ruthlessly combated the petty-bourgeois illusions about the unity of the 'people' and about the absence of a class struggle within the people. In using the word 'people', Marx did not thereby gloss over class differences, but united definite elements capable of carrying the revolution to completion...

"With corresponding allowances for concrete national peculiarities and the substitution of serfdom for feudalism, all the propositions are fully applicable to Russia in 1905. There is no doubt that by learning from the experience of Germany, as elucidated by Marx, we cannot arrive at any other slogan for a decisive victory of the revolution than the slogan calling for a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. There is no doubt that the main components of the 'people', whom Marx in 1848 contrasted with the resisting

reactionaries and the treacherous bourgeoisie, are the proletariat and the peasantry."

What does emerge from the above quotations that mainly concern the question and discussion here?

First, the concept of the 'people' does not gloss over the class differences, but only speaks of definite elements in a definite stage who are capable of carrying the revolution to completion.

Second, the "main components of the 'people' " spoken of here are workers and peasants.

Has Mao, in defining the class alliance of the revolution in the new democratic stage as the "united dictatorship of all anti-imperialist classes" been guilty of ignoring any basic aspects as stated above? In our opinion, no such guilt exists on his part. On the other hand, he has concretised the 'people' in the particular stage in detail. Has he overlooked the fact that the main components of the 'people' are workers and peasants? See what he says, below:

"Who form the revolutionary democratic groups?

"The workers are of course the most thorough revolutionary democrats. Besides the workers, the peasants form the largest revolutionary democratic group."

It is clear that Mao describes workers and peasants as the main component parts of the people.

Is it the Marxist way of understanding the slogan of dictatorship of workers and peasants to mean that it comprises only of workers and peasants, to the exclusion of other revolutionary sections, etc., when in reality it means workers and peasants as the main components and not the only components? Is it not to understand it mechanically?

For example, Stalin says, concerning the Chinese revolution, after the betrayal of the Kuomintang big bourgeoisie:

"Efforts must particularly be made to have the struggle in towns directed against the big bourgeoisie, and especially against the imperialists, so that the Chinese petty-bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie should as far as possible be kept within the united front against the common enemy."

Does the polit bureau feel that the slogan of dictatorship of workers and peasants advanced for China by the Communist

International in its colonial theses contradicts the above strategy advanced by Stalin?

Is not then the definition of new democratic strategy by Mao as "united dictatorship of all anti-imperialist classes" consistent with Lenin-Stalin teachings and Communist International? Undoubtedly, it is so. It is our polit bureau that departs from it and not Mao.

In this context it is necessary to point out another aspect of the problem. The polit bureau is inclined to forget a formulation the political thesis itself has made in this connection.

"It will be a people's democratic state based on the alliance of anti-imperialist classes workers, peasants and the oppressed petty-bourgeoisie..."

Again, speaking of the new class alliance, the thesis says: "It is necessary to marshall the forces of the revolutionary people in a new way, i.e. to forge a new alliance of all the classes for whom the success of the democratic revolution is vital."

Why does the polit bureau go hammer and tongs at Mao for having said "united dictatorship of all anti-imperialist classes" when the political thesis itself says "alliance of anti-imperialist classes" etc.? How has it been permissible to 'water down' the 'precise and pregnant' slogan of dictatorship of workers and peasants by adding 'oppressed petty-bourgeoisie' also in our thesis? How has it become 'loose' erroneous' etc., in case of Mao when he added the middle bourgeoisie also? Evidently the grouse of our polit bureau against Mao is that his objective analysis of the stage and the classes does not agree with the sectarian pseudo-class analysis made by our polit bureau. How else are we to explain this attack on this aspect?

Then coming to the concept 'people'. Did Mao gloss over the class differences among the people? Not in the least.

See how Mao defines 'people' in the particular stage.

"Who are the 'people'? At the present stage of China, the people are the working class, the class of the peasantry, the petty-bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. Under the leadership of the working class and Communist Party, these classes united in order to form their own state and to elect their own government

in order to establish over the lackeys of imperialism ..... ("Dictatorship of People's Democracy").

It is thus very clear that Mao's formulations on this are neither 'erroneous' nor 'loose' but completely correct. Only the polit bureau's understanding and interpretation of the formulations in question are mechanical, dogmatic and sectarian.

We think it necessary here to explain the concept 'people's democracy'.

In this connection, one must keep in mind three fundamental points when one wants to understand the concept 'people's democracy'.

What are these three fundamental points?

(1) In its class content, people's democracy implies hegemony of the proletariat in one measure or other, according to the stages and the maturity of the revolutionary forces.

(2) In its class content and the measure of proletarian hegemony exercised, people's democracy passes through different stages of development.

In the colonies and semi-colonies, the class content of the dictatorship of people's democracy at the early stage is, according to Mao:

"The working class, the class of peasantry, the petty-bourgeoisie, and national bourgeoisie (i.e. middle bourgeoisie - *Andhra Secretariat*) under the leadership of the working class and the Communist Party. These classes united in order to form their own state and to elect their own government".

But as people's democracy develops, i.e. the revolution advances, and with the progressive strengthening of proletarian hegemony in the state and exclusion of the bourgeois groups and parties, the class content also undergoes a radical change so that at this later stage people's democracy effectively fulfils the functions of dictatorship of the proletariat.

Throughout all the stages of development (i.e. from the earliest stage when it is a united dictatorship of all anti-imperialist or anti-fascist classes to the stage when it becomes crystallised as the dictatorship of the proletariat), it is called people's democratic state because the form remains essentially the same, viz people's democratic form, as distinct from the Soviet form. But from this

to confuse or mix up the earlier stages with the later stages and to equate people's democracy mechanically at all stages with the dictatorship of the proletariat would mean throwing overboard the fundamental teachings of Leninism-Stalinism as well as historical experience.

(3) As regards form, the people's democratic state, both in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe as well as in the colonies and semi-colonies, is republican-democratic in form, as distinct from the Soviet form. Even at the latter stage when it fulfils the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat (as at present in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe) the form of the people's democratic state is different from the Soviet form which built socialism in the Soviet Union during 1922-35.

"The transition from capitalism to communism will certainly create a great variety and abundance of political forms, but their essence will inevitably be the same—the dictatorship of the proletariat", says Lenin (*The State and Revolution*).

The democratic-republican form of the state in which the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat are exercised effectively today in the people's democracies of Central and Eastern Europe is a brilliant confirmation of this farsighted formulation of Lenin.

On the question of form comrades in our party have not generally disputed the above; i.e. how the people's democratic state throughout all its stages of development has its own form—the republication-democratic form—as distinct from the Soviet form and how even at the later stages the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat are exercised only through this form. It is true the understanding is not complete or deep enough, there are gaps in it to be filled up. But there is agreement on the basic facts above stated and these facts are not contested (though their understanding on them still remains incomplete). That is why we do not propose to enter into any further detailed discussion here on the question of form.

On the question of class content of people's democracy there is confusion and controversy inside our party; and controversy has a vital bearing on the question of present stage and strategy

of our revolution in India since our slogan is people's democratic revolution. That is why it is necessary to go into a detailed discussion on the question of content of people's democracy.

Before entering into such a discussion, however, it is necessary to draw comrades' attention to one fact. It is that the specific deviation that has cropped up inside our party has come from a different end, from the type of deviation that occurred in the communist and workers' parties of the people's democracies of Eastern Europe, which the leadership of those parties (Beirut, Dimitrov and others), had to settle account with.

In the communist parties of the people's democracies of Eastern Europe as can be seen from the discussions and self-criticism which were carried through inside those parties in 1948 and 1949, the main danger became the rightwing and bourgeois-nationalist deviation which sought to counterpose people's democracy to dictatorship of the proletariat, to present the road of people's democracy as a 'third' road between socialism and capitalism and to oppose the road of people's democracy to the soviet road. In order to overcome and smash this deviation, the leaders of these parties (Beirut, Dimitrov, and others) had to come forward and enunciate towards the end of 1948 and beginning of 1949 how people's democracy at this stage fulfils effectively in essence the function of the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e. that their type of state is nothing but a variant of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Inside our party however the specific type of deviation that has cropped up on this question and that needs to be fought and overcome is the left-sectarian deviation. What does this deviation do?

(1) It seeks to mechanically equate people's democracy to dictatorship of the proletariat without regard to its stage of development in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

(2) It seeks to ignore the "essentially distinctive features which distinguish people's democracy in the colonial and dependent countries who are liberating themselves from the imperialist yoke from people's democracies in the countries of Central and South-eastern Europe" (Zhukov). It ignores the fact that the extent of



the bourgeois-democratic tasks confronting people's democracy in the colonies and semi-colonies oppressed by imperialism will be considerably greater than in the other less backward and more developed countries to whom colonial oppression has been unknown or almost unknown.

(3) From all the above, it draws the left-sectarian conclusion that in our country, at the present stage, our slogan must be socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat on the ground that our immediate slogan too is people's democratic republic.

It is in order to overcome and smash this deviation— which leads to the most dangerous left-sectarian and left-adventurist practice—that the discussion below has to be concretely undertaken by us. Comrades must therefore try to understand the issue from this angle— from the angle of the theoretical and practical problems thrown up by our movement at the present stage—and not from the angle of an abstract academic discussion on people's democracy in general.

The two types of deviation abovementioned— one that occurred in some of the people's democracies of Central and Eastern Europe, the other that has occurred inside our party— are exactly similar to the ones against which Dimitrov warned in his report at the seventh world congress of the Communist International. Dimitrov gave this warning regarding the united-front governments that were visualised to be brought into existence in order to fight the growing menace of fascism. In appreciating it, one fact must be born in mind by us, i.e. it would be wrong on our part to mechanically equate the united-front governments of which Dimitrov spoke in that particular context to the people's democratic states that came into existence in Europe after the defeat of fascism at the hands of the Red Army, the types of deviation are basically of the same nature which Dimitrov then warned against.

This is how Dimitrov put the issue:

“Fifteen years ago Lenin called upon us to focus all our attention on ‘searching out forms of transition’ or approach to the proletarian revolution.’ It may be put that in a number of countries the united-front government will prove to be one of

the most important transitional forms. The 'left' - doctrinaires have always avoided this precept of Lenin's. Like the limited propagandists that they were, they spoke only of 'aims', without ever worrying about 'forms of transition'. The right-opportunists, on the other hand, tried to establish a special 'democratic intermediate stage' lying between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the purpose of instilling into the workers the illusion of a peaceful parliamentary procession from the one dictatorship to the other. This fictitious 'intermediate stage' they also called the 'transitional form', and even quoted Lenin on the subject! But this piece of swindling was not difficult to expose: for Lenin spoke of the form of transition and approach to the 'proletarian revolution', i.e. to the overthrow of the bourgeois dictatorship, and not of some transitional form between the bourgeois and the proletarian dictatorship."

Bearing this in mind, let us now go into the matter in detail.

### (1) *The Transitional Character of People's Democracy*

Some comrades have a typical way of arguing things to prove their contention that people's democracy at the first stage is equal to the dictatorship of the proletariat. They quote the following passage of Lenin in their support:

"The forms of bourgeois state are extremely varied, but in essence they are all the same: in one way or another, in the final analysis, all these states are inevitably the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The transition from capitalism to communism will certainly create a great variety and abundance of political forms, but their essence will inevitably be the same; the dictatorship of the proletariat" (*The State and Revolution*).

From this they build a syllogism thus: all transitional forms from capitalism to communism are essentially dictatorship of the proletariat; people's democracy is a transitional form from capitalism to communism; hence it is essentially a dictatorship of the proletariat.

This may be good formal logic, but not correct Marxism.

One could as well recall here what Lenin said in another connection and context, reprimanding the 'lefts' saying that they

go on repeating "simple, routine and, at a first glance, incontrovertible truths, such as: 'Three is more than two' but politics is more like algebra than arithmetic; but still more like higher mathematics than elementary mathematics" ("*Left-Wing Communism*").

At the outset one must understand the precise context in which Lenin was speaking the above (i.e. regarding the state forms during the period of transition from capitalism to communism). In his pamphlet, *The State and Revolution*, Lenin was answering the Kautskyite distortion and repudiation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was in this context Lenin made the observation in question. He was taking cudgels against those who confuse the forms of state and the content of state. This point he has dealt with more thoroughly and the grater detail in his pamphlet *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*.

What he specifically stresses here is one remarkable formulation made by Marx, i.e.

"What I did that was new was to prove: (1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular, historic phases in the development of production; (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society" (*The State and Revolution*).

Lenin fought the revisionist and reinstated the concept of dictatorship of the proletariat as part of the essence of the Marxist doctrine of the state. He concluded that to build socialism and communism without the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible and unthinkable.

It must be noted, Lenin was also visualising different forms of the proletarian dictatorship. It is in keeping with this alone that he describes the proletarian dictatorship in Russia as "the Soviets are the Russian form of the proletarian dictatorship" and as one of the forms of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is to ram home this point, i.e. not to confuse the content and the form of

the proletarian dictatorship, that Lenin makes the observation in question i.e. "The transition from capitalism to communism will certainly create a great variety and abundance of political forms, but their essence will inevitably be the same: the dictatorship of the proletariat."

This concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat as an instrument to effect transition of class society into classless society should not be mechanically equated as to mean that all the transitional stage to the dictatorship of the proletariat are by themselves the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is because of this wrong equation and interpretation that the comrades referred to above are taking up the position that all the transitional stages such as people's democratic dictatorship, democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants, etc., are nothing but the dictatorship of the proletariat in essence. And thus, following from this, in our case it is attempted to apply and advance the slogan of socialist revolution at the present stage in India on the ground that our slogan too is people's democratic republic.

But the entire historical experience and the teachings of Lenin and Stalin speak against this vulgarisation.

Are we to suppose that straight starting from Marx's slogan of people's dictatorship, during the German democratic revolution in 1848, the slogan of democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants and the slogan of the dictatorship of workers and poor peasants given by the Bolsheviks, the slogan of people's democratic republics advanced in the Eastern European countries in the earlier stages, and the slogan on new democratic republic advanced in China by Mao — are all one and the same, and are only different names for the dictatorship of the proletariat? It is nothing but laughter-provoking.

What is the Marxist-Leninist definition of the dictatorship of the proletariat?

Stalin, in his book *Problems of Leninism*, quotes Lenin:

"The class which took political power into its hands did so knowing that it took power alone. That is a part of the concept dictatorship of the proletariat. This concept has meaning only when the single class knows that it alone is taking power into its

hands, and does not deceive itself or others with the talk about 'popular government elected by all, sanctified, by the whole people'" ("Speech at Transport Workers' Conference").

Explaining further that it is a special form of class alliance, Stalin says, "This special form of class alliance consists in that the guiding force of this alliance is the proletariat. This special form of alliance consists in that the leader in the state, the leader in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat is one party, the party of the proletariat, the party of the communists, which does not and cannot share that leadership with other parties."

Now, is it not evident that in the above described transitional states, such as the dictatorship of workers and peasants, people's democracy of the first stage, etc. the proletariat and its party, at one stage or other, in one measure or other, had to share the political leadership with other classes and parties? If so how can one oversimplify them as to equate them with the concept dictatorship of the proletariat? It is definitely wrong.

Once these comrades dislodged from this position they will shift their position slightly and will begin to argue that the people's democratic dictatorship is in essence the dictatorship of the proletariat. Is this correct? This also is an oversimplification and in certain respects incorrect too. When can it be called in essence the dictatorship of the proletariat? For example, Stalin explains the significance of the slogan 'the dictatorship of workers and poor peasants', advanced on the eve of October thus:

"We marched towards October under the slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasantry, and in October, we put it into effect formally in as much as we had a bloc with the left socialist-revolutionaries and shared leadership with them although actually the dictatorship of the proletariat already existed, since we Bolsheviks constituted the majority" ("The Party's Three Fundamental Slogans on the Peasant Problem").

This is what is characterised as 'actually' the dictatorship of the proletariat, even though the party of the proletariat shared power with left socialist-revolutionaries. Why? The vital factor

here is the party of the proletariat, i.e. Communist Party, is already a majority in the state. This can be termed in 'essence' the dictatorship of the proletariat. Is it correct to assert that all the people's democratic republics that have come into existence in the East European countries are in essence dictatorship of the proletariat right from their inception? The facts speak against it. Beside sharing power with other parties, like the socialists and sometimes petty-bourgeois parties also, there were cases where the party of the proletariat, i.e. Communist Party, was a minority party in the government. Yet, thanks to the liberating role of the Soviet Union and its direct assistance, the working class could forge ahead and unite under the banner of single united Marxist parties, which enable them successfully to head the state. It is only when all the workers' parties united into single united Marxist parties, and became the unquestioned leaders and the majority in the governments, they could be unhesitatingly characterised as dictatorships of the proletariat in essence. It was at this stage of development only that Marxist leaders in those countries could characterise them as definite forms of proletarian dictatorship in essence.

We think now the matters are clear. Not that every transitional stage of the people's democratic state can be characterised the dictatorship of the proletariat or in essence the dictatorship of the proletariat. But certain minimum prerequisites are essential—unless one stoops to violate the basic tenets of Lenin-Stalin teachings.

This in brief is so far as the point about the concept of people's democracy is concerned.

Now to the second fundamental point about the concept people's democracy, i.e. proletarian hegemony:

The concept of people's democracy necessarily and inevitably implies the hegemony of the proletariat. Without the hegemony of the proletariat, every participation of the communist party in the government cannot be characterised as people's democracy. For example, in France and Italy the participation of the communist in the respective governments for a time has been

observed by us all. But did we, or could one, call them people's democracies? No. Why? Unless some minimum conditions, strength and guarantee are there to exercise proletarian hegemony and steadily advance ahead to consolidate and transform that hegemony into the dictatorship of the proletariat, it will be wrong to call them so. No doubt the anti-fascist struggle and the partisan war that were conducted against Hitler's occupation armies were, in both the cases of France and Italy, under the hegemony of the working class and the Communist Party. This hegemony could not be transformed into hegemony in the governments that came into existence after the defeat of Hitler. This is to be explained, besides several internal factors and weaknesses prevailing in these countries, by the presence of Anglo-American imperialist armies as the 'liberators' and the advance of the real liberationist armies, the Red Army.

What is proletarian hegemony in the state?

In a nutshell, in the words of Stalin, "the hegemony of the proletariat was the embryo of and the transitional stage to, the dictatorship of the proletariat".

This pregnant formulation is missed by many when they speak of proletarian hegemony what emerges from the above formulation? The following extremely rich ideas are expressed therein: (a) the hegemony is the embryonic form of the dictatorship of the proletariat; (b) it is a transitional stage to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The proletariat and its party must be extremely conscious not only of its immense strength already expressed through the realisation of hegemony, but also of its stupendous tasks ahead in order to develop that embryo to its full mature form and complete the transition without stopping the revolution halfway to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Does it not once again clear it show that every stage of the hegemony of the proletariat exercised in people's democratic state cannot be mechanically equated to the dictatorship of the proletariat? Thus the earlier stages of hegemony embody the embryo and the latter and final is the 'child'. Embryo is not yet the 'child'. This is the correct meaning of Stalin's formulation.

But exactly this is the type of ridiculous mistake some of our comrades are sometimes falling into when they identify the

concept of people's democracy at the first stage—without regard to the stages of its development etc.—with the dictatorship of the proletariat; and following from this formulate the present stage of our revolution in India as the stage of socialist revolution.

Besides these two fundamental points, the other points to be taken into account with respect to the concept people's democracy are:

Thirdly, the concept 'people' is neither homogeneous nor unchanging (in its class content). That is, it is unlike the strictly and rigidly defined class terms like the proletariat, agricultural labour, etc. It is a heterogeneous and mixed concept, and changing (in its class content). Its class content changes depending on the alignment of the class forces, according to the different stages and phases of the development of the revolution. For example, during the anti-fascist war, in the fascist-occupied countries, all those classes and sections that were interested in the defeat of fascism and the defence of independence of their countries were rallied into what were known as the national front, popular front, fatherland front, anti-fascist front, people's front, etc. Undoubtedly those fronts included sections of the bourgeoisie besides the basic components of the people—workers and peasants. Thus in this sense, and for that particular limited stage and period of the struggle alone, the term 'people's front' included sections of the bourgeoisie as part of the broad concept 'people' comprising the front (though at a later stage, with the further accentuation of the struggle, the sections of the bourgeoisie betrayed and were thrown out of the front). That is how the concept 'people' is not homogeneous and fixed and is subject to change.

Fourthly, it is also necessary to take into account "the essentially distinctive features which distinguish people's democracy in the colonial and dependent countries who are liberating themselves from imperialist yoke, from people's democracy in the countries of Central and South Eastern Europe. The first and the main difference consists in the fact that in so far as in the colonies and the dependent countries, the cultural and economic development has been partially hampered and



artificially stifled by imperialism, the extent of bourgeois-democratic tasks confronting people's democracy in these countries will be considerably greater than in the other less backward and more developed countries, to whom colonial oppression has been unknown or almost unknown.

"It is perfectly clear the people's democratic revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries cannot but bear in the first place an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal character. Hence it follows that the people's democratic revolution in colonies must in its development go through a number of consecutive stages and the period of transition to the solution of socialist tasks, to the construction of socialist economy, in these countries may be more prolonged than in the other countries of people's democracy, which were not colonies" (E. Zhukov, "Problems of the National and Colonial Struggles after the Second World War").

Fifthly, the concept of people's democracy also, as we have seen in the concept of the 'people', is not a fixed static concept.

"The regime of people's democracy is constantly developing passing through a number of stages in its development. The alignment of class forces changes in the process of democratic development. During the first stage together with the representatives of peasants, workers and intellectuals, representatives of the bourgeoisie were permitted to participate in the administration of the state in as much as they loyally cooperated with the people's government. Subsequently, in the course of the democratic development, to the extent as to the socialist nature of the new government grew increasingly apparent, temporary fellow travellers dropped out" (F. Konstantinov, "Countries of People's Democracy on Road to Socialism").

Briefly, thus, it is not one-stage and 'all-in-one-stroke' concept.

These are the fundamental and main characteristics of the concept people's democracy, in brief.

Thus the concept people's democracy can be correctly and comprehensively understood only if we take into account the concept hegemony of the proletariat, its transitional character, the class understanding of the term 'people', the features that

distinguish people's democracies in colonial and dependent countries from the Central and East European people's democracies, the character of its constantly developing and passing through a number of stages finally getting crystallised as the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the people's democratic form of government in which it is exercised as distinct from the Soviet form.

Missing any of these will land us in serious mistakes of stage, strategy and tactics.

In the light of these where lie the basic mistakes of the polit bureau on this issue?

Beside the other things we have earlier examined, two things stand out.

(a) The polit bureau has not understood its transitional character correctly.

The transitional character of people's democracy as understood by our polit bureau is the stage in which the entire bourgeoisie is excluded from political power. It does not ask at what stage of its development this exclusion takes or has taken place, but concludes confidently as if at no stage the inclusion of certain sections of bourgeoisie does take place. It is neither true in the case of East European democracies in their early stages, nor will it be so, more particularly, in our case.

The phrases the polit bureau uses such as "bourgeoisie is thrown out of political power, but not yet economically vanquished etc." actually speak of a different transitional stage, even after the proletarian dictatorship is established. The transitional stage under the dictatorship of the proletariat is a stage which begins to transform class society into a classless society.

Precisely the lack of understanding and vulgarisation of the above has landed the polit bureau into the 'mixed' stage, single stage, etc. revolution.

(b) The polit bureau has also failed to distinguish the distinctive features between people's democracy in colonial and dependent countries, who are liberating themselves from the imperialist yoke, and the people's democracy in the East European countries.

The polit bureau asserts that it has deduced from Zhdanov's report its formulations regarding the exclusion of the whole of the bourgeoisie from the people's democratic power, etc. Leave aside the fact that it has interpreted Zhdanov's formulation on people's democracy wrongly, but even to the extent it has adopted from Zhdanov has the least consideration been given to the above aspect— of distinguishing the distinctive features referred to above between people's democracy in colonial and dependent countries and the people's democracy in the East European countries?

No. On the other hand, when Mao has precisely taken these distinctive features into consideration and made his formulations on people's democracy, the polit bureau violently attacks them.

Hence, once again, the same old sin—discussed in the foregoing—continues to haunt the polit bureau, i.e. brushing aside the distinction between revolution in colonial and dependent countries on the one hand and revolution in independent, capitalist, imperialist countries on the other.

When the polit bureau goes extremely wrong on very many basic questions, such as Zhdanov's report, Mountbatten award, the agrarian class analysis and the stage of the revolution, it is inevitable that it gives a wrong strategy also.

Let us first of all show how the Andhra Secretariat *Draft Note* defines the strategy.

“Objective: to overthrow imperialist-big business-feudal combine and completely wipe out all the features of feudalism, medievalism and colonial impress. Main force of the revolution: workers both rural and industrial. Immediate reserves: peasantry in general with the exception of those rich farmer who are unable to shake off their tails of feudalism, and poor and middle peasants in particular remain as immediate reserves throughout this stage of new democratic revolution. Direction of the main blow: against the collaborationist bourgeoisie and its henchmen who have been duping the peasantry and are still trying to keep their grip on them, to betray the revolution. The proletariat must carry to completion the new democratic revolution by allying itself with the mass of peasants in general and poor and middle peasants in particular in order to crush by force the power of resistance the

imperialist-big business-feudal combine and paralyse the instability of the middle bourgeoisie, upper middle class and a section of the rich peasantry.”

The polit bureau criticised and condemned all this as gross reformisms.

The term ‘neutralisation’ used in this context by the Andhra secretariat is brushed aside as of no significance and equated with ‘collaboration’ and ‘alliance’ by the polit bureau. The argument goes thus: ‘No doubt, the documents talk generally of ‘neutralisation’, in respect of an enemy who has to be openly fought and routed—neutralisation becomes the banner of collaboration with the enemy” (*Tactical Line*).

Is this a correct position?

The term ‘neutralisation’ used by Lenin and Stalin in classics is not such as can be mechanically given a simple literary meaning fixed for all occasions. It has to be understood in its context of things, i.e. how it is used and in reference to what class and which stage, etc. The term ‘paralyse the instability’ or ‘neutralise’ is used by Lenin with regard to Russian bourgeoisie during the pre-February stage, in the sense of ‘causing it to recoil from the revolution’. As the middle peasants’ vacillations between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the struggle for power are great and considerable, the proletariat should set itself the task of fighting for neutralising this stratum and not allow the class enemy to placate it and use it against the revolutionary proletariat. Though the proletariat in its struggle for socialist revolution ‘cannot set to the task of winning them over’ to the side of the proletariat, the possibility of this stratum swinging over to the side of the proletarian revolution under certain circumstances is not ruled out. For example, while advancing to October socialist revolution, according to the strategy worked out by the Bolshevik Party, it contains only ‘neutralisation’ of the middle peasantry. But actually, on the eve of October, the middle peasantry swung over to the side of the revolution. Here is what Stalin says on it: “as to the middle peasants, whose vacillations had retarded the development of the revolution in the period from April to August 1917, after the rout of Kornilov, they definitely began to swing towards the Bolshevik Party, joining forces with the poor peasants.”

“ The existence of this alliance (between the working class and the poor peasantry) determined the conduct of the poor peasantry, determined the conduct of the middle peasants, who had long been vacillating and only on the eve of October uprising wholeheartedly swung over towards the revolution”( *History of the CPSU-B*).

What is it we want to drive at here? It is that the term ‘neutralisation’ used by the Andhra secretariat as regards the middle bourgeoisie does not necessarily imply guaranteed alliance, though it neither precludes such possibility at some stage of the struggle nor dogmatically asserts that one should be prepared to commit categorically to such a possibility alone.

At the time of the provincial (Andhra) party conference (January 1948) an amendment “neutralising or winning over the middle bourgeoisie at a stage”, etc. was moved to the draft political thesis, based on the December 1947 report of Mao to the central committee of the Communist Party of China. The amendment was accepted by the conference, excepting one or two delegates. Though it was passed by the provincial conference, the Andhra secretariat took up the position only of ‘neutralisation’ in its *Draft Note*, as it thought that was the correct position.

The documents of the polit bureau violently attacked this line. They characterised it as “an advocacy of alliance in one form or another with sections of the exploiting bourgeoisie”, as an attempt “to tie down the working class to the apron-strings of the bourgeoisie”, a “shamefaced apology to ally with some other sections of the bourgeoisie”, “right-reformism in its crassest form” and an attempt to take the party back to the same Joshian line of pre-second party congress etc.

When the Andhra secretariat cites the anti-feudal role of the rich peasant with facts from the experience of Telangana, the polit bureau asserts. “The documents say that this has been proved in Telangana. In reality no such proof exists”! Indeed, a wonderful way of asserting against facts!

Thus the polit bureau comes out with a strategy supposed to be worked out in strict conformity with Marxism-Leninism: while the Andhra secretariat is alleged to have turned Marxism upside down and advanced a ‘crassest reformist line’!

Not having satisfied itself with making a mockery of Marxism by violating every basic tenet of Marxism-Leninism, the polit bureau goes on to invoke the names of Zhdanov and Kusinen in this context also.

At another place in the document, *Tactical Line*, while attacking the Andhra Secretariat for having quoted Mao—which it characterised as “Mao’s old outlook on new democracy”—the polit bureau deduced from Zhdanov’s reports at the nine parties’ conference a conclusion which pits Zhdanov’s report against Mao’s formulation. It is started thus: “A very precise class character of people’s democracy is given there—a characterisation which excludes the bourgeoisie from power. But all this does not find place in the document” (*Tactical Line*).

Is it correct to say that Zhdanov has said what the polit bureau ascribes in the above? Is it pardonable for such misinterpretation and distortions to be made in support of one’s own left-deviationist line?

The following quotation from Zhdanov’s report will lay bare the truth:

“In the course of struggle, the pro-fascist elements, the collaborators with Hitler, the most influential of the big capitalists, large landowners, high officials and monarchist officers—were exposed as betrayers of the national interests. In the Danubian countries liberation from German fascist slavery was accompanied by the removal from power of the top bourgeoisie and landlords who had compromised with German fascism...” etc.

Is it not evident that what Zhdanov has pointed out is exclusion from power of the top bourgeoisie and landlords, etc., and not as our polit bureau says, the entire bourgeoisie, including the rich peasant?

Again as early as May 1949, C. Rajeswara Rao, in his people’s democratic state, Zhdanov says: “where a bloc of the labouring classes of the population, headed by the working class, constitutes the leading force.”

Thus, according to Zhdanov, “the block of labouring classes” is the leading force” in the people’s democratic state. If one

were to understand it as it ought to be, plain as it is, the term "leading force" implies that there are other sections also in the people's democratic government. But for our polit bureau the term "leading force" mysteriously, perhaps conveniently, disappears and only the bloc of labouring classes to the exclusion of all the exploiting elements remains. The polit bureau substituted "the whole of the bourgeoisie" for Zhdanov's "top bourgeoisie"! What a small oversight!

We think it is impermissible to put in the mouth of Zhdanov the idea of total exclusion of the bourgeoisie as an entire class from the earlier stages of people's democratic government. It is neither factually correct nor historically true.

Starting from persons like Dr. Benes and Masaryk in Czechoslovakia to Nagy and Co in Hungary, who were participants in the people's democratic government still at the time of the nine parties' conference—were not all of them representatives of the bourgeoisie? It is needless to labour the point further.

Again as early as May 1949, C. Rajeswara Rao, in his letter to the polit bureau brings this point in particular to the notice of the polit bureau. The letter says: "While I was with you, it was only the Chinese documents which were making distinction between big business and small bourgeois sections. But, after I came here, a number of articles have been published in the organ of the Cominform bureau, *American Political Affairs*, *the New Times*, even our central organ... the interpretation we have given to Zhdanov's report on this point, is not in consonance with that of communist parties of several other countries and the Cominform."

Then the letter goes on to cite relevant extracts from eight Marxist sources on this point.

Here are the eight points which the letter gives:

"(1) *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy!* of 1 July 1948 publishes Mao's report where he makes such a distinction. Here is the relevant passage:

"The new democratic revolution can and must be no other revolution than the revolution of the great masses of the people

led by the proletariat, against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism. That is to say, that this revolution can have no other class and political party as the leader, but can only and must have the proletariat and Chinese Communist Party acting as the leader. That is to say the united front made up of the people taking part in this revolution is very broad comprising of workers, peasants, independent labourers, professional people, intelligentsia, liberal bourgeoisie, and enlightened gentry split off from the landlord class... the enemies which this revolution is to overthrow are only and must be imperialism feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism.'

"(2) *China Digest*, No. 4, Vol. 5, publishes an article by an important Chinese communist leader. Liu Shao-chi where he makes such a distinction not only for China but for all colonial and semi-colonial countries and warns communist parties of these countries that it would be a mistake not to utilise it.

"Of course, in other colonial and semi-colonial countries like India, Burma ... it is likewise necessary for the communists in order to defend the interests of their own Nations to adopt firm policies against the National betrayal of that section of bourgeois reactionaries (mainly big bourgeois reactionaries) which has already capitulated to imperialism. Otherwise they would be mistaken. On the other hand, the communists should establish anti-imperialist cooperation with the national bourgeoisie who still oppose imperialism and do not oppose the anti-imperialist struggle for the masses of the people. Should the communists fail to establish this kind of cooperation in earnest, but on the contrary either oppose or refuse this kind of cooperation, that would also be an extremely great mistake. This cooperation must be established in earnest even though it be unreliable, temporary and vacillating.'

"(3) R. Palme Dutt's article in the organ of the Cominform bureau (numbers of 15 October and 1 November) on 'Struggle of the Colonial People against Imperialism' speaks only of 'dominant sections of colonial bourgeoisie', having moved from a previously vacillating partial oppositional role to a full counter-revolutionary role and block with imperialism.(1 November Cominform bureau organ).



“Though he is not positive like the Chinese comrades about ‘cooperation’ with another bourgeois section which is in opposition to imperialism, the thread of his article is the same thing. Otherwise there is no meaning in making such a distinction at all.

“(4) The general secretary of the Communist Party of Japan, an advanced industrial country, also speaks in the same strain: ‘Conditions in Japan now favour building a broad people’s front representing workers, farmers, middle class groups and even small and medium industrialists’ (PA, Vol. VII, No. 32, article on Japanese elections).

“(5) Member of the Executive Committee of Communist Party of Cuba speaks of the same thing for Latin-American Colonies:

“The Brazilian people have just scored an important victory in defeating the treasonable attempt of Director Dutra to surrender the national petroleum oil resources to Standard Oil. Wherever the proletariat has the maturity necessary to head the fight for national anti-imperialist unity, there we see developing an alliance of workers, peasants, the middle class and sections of the bourgeoisie.’ (*Political Affairs*, December 1948).

“(6) In the same issue, the secretary of the American Communist Party, in his article on American elections, speaks of Wallace to be a progressive and says the ‘Progressive Party will grow as a mass people’s party, as a united front of anti-war and anti-monopoly party’. Who is Wallace? Is he a petty bourgeois? No. He himself told he is a pure and simple businessman...

“(7) Last of all comes Dyakov’s article on our country itself which says ‘All this confirms the opinion of the democratic press that although the Congress leader claim to represent all the peoples of India, actually they voice the interest of only the big bourgeoisie, chiefly of the Gujarati and Marwari. These having made a deal with British imperialism and bowed to the bankers of Wall Street have no desire to share the market with the weaker bourgeoisie of the other Indian nationalities. Furthermore the formation of national provinces will necessarily imply the abolition of the feudal states. In the provinces, where the big bourgeoisie is weak, the predominant role in the local organs of

government would be played by elements more democratic than the centre. But this would not be in the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie' (*New Times*, No.3, 1949).

“(8) Prof. A. Schneerson writes in his article, ‘The General Crisis of Capitalism is Becoming More Acute’ which appeared in Tass (Delhi) daily bulletin, dated 5 January 1949, that :

In the colonies themselves the various classes have taken up new different positions. In the major colonial and semi-colonial countries the big native bourgeoisie, frightened by the future development of the democratic movement and the growth of the working class resulting from the industrial development, switched over to the camp of imperialism and ceased to play a revolutionary and progressive role in the colonies. The working class took over the banner of the national-liberation movement and the task of the rallying of the popular masses for the struggle against imperialism. Of course even today it would be incorrect to think that temporary agreements of the revolutionary forces with one or another stratum of the petty or middle bourgeoisie and in some colonies, at a definite stage, even with certain groups of big national bourgeoisie are precluded. But whatever the case, the radical demarcation of the class forces in the colonies today consists in that the working class is at the head of the national-liberation struggle.”

All this makes no impression on the polit bureau. It refuses to revise its own understanding. It doggedly sticks to its own guns. Mao's article, “Dictatorship of People's Democracy” even when published in the organ of the Cominform bureau, fails to evoke any reaction on the part of the polit bureau. Even Liu Shao-chi's opening speech at the Peking conference, though published in the organ of Cominform bureau, leaves the polit bureau unruffled.

This dogmatic attitude of the polit bureau continues right up to the moment of the editorial article in the organ of Cominform bureau (27 January 1950) and only after its appearance and the sharp correction it contains on the line of the Communist Party of India, does the polit bureau begin to think—though still on the working lines.

Let us see what the editorial of the organ of the Cominform bureau says:

“A sham independence was bestowed on India...the national independence and freedom of India.”

Thus, we have two alternative lines—the line of the Cominform bureau and the line of the polit bureau.

Let us make a contrast of them.

(1) According to the Cominform bureau, in the sham independence of India the “interests of British imperialism remain ‘sacred and inviolable’”. But according to our polit bureau it is the collaborationist bourgeoisie that is able to “bargain hard” and “advance its class interests within the framework of the Mountbatten plan”, against imperialism.

(2) According to the Cominform bureau, it is the Anglo-American imperialism that is the spearhead of the counter-revolutionary combine. But, according to the polit bureau, it is the national bourgeoisie.

(3) Who has collaborated with imperialism? According to the Cominform bureau, it is the “reactionary big bourgeoisie and feudal princes”. But according to the polit bureau, no such distinction, big or small exists; it is the entire bourgeoisie, including the rich peasant.

(4) According to the Cominform bureau, the working class must ally with “all the peasantry”, i.e. including the rich peasant. But according to the polit bureau, rich peasant is the “spearhead of counter-revolution in the countryside” and is to be “fought and routed”.

(5) Who is the vacillating ally? According to the line of the Cominform bureau—as the polit bureau itself now interprets it—it is the middle bourgeoisie. But according to the polit bureau line—in its documents—it is the middle peasant.

Thus we see that the strategy advanced by our polit bureau has nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism and its concrete application to the conditions of India.

Is it not clear that if anything is near to the line of the Cominform bureau, it is the line advanced by the Andhra secretariat in its *Draft Note*, which has been characterised by

the polit bureau as grossly reformist? The truth is, not that the line of the Andhra secretariat is gross reformism, but that the strategical line advanced by the polit bureau is crude leftism and sectarianism.

Such are the facts.

Is it not audacious on the part of the polit bureau to characterise its blunders, even as late as February 1950, in its latest document (for all party members), and to try to explain away its Himalayan blunders as “lagging behind” in actual achievements, and a small slip that occurred “in combating reformism” etc.? Is it conceivable that with such a crude sectarian line one could combat reformism? In the particular context, what the polit bureau fought was not reformism, indeed, but the honest attempts of the Andhra secretariat to grapple with realities basing on Marxism-Leninism. Such is the real face of things.

How are we to account for these blunders of the polit bureau? To what are they to be traced?

Besides committing a series of blunders—such as the erroneous and mechanical interpretation of Zhadanov’s formulations, the opportunist interpretation of the Mountbatten award, the clean bypassing of the national-liberationist character of the Indian revolution and the pseudo-class analysis it made—besides these, the main link for this blundering is to be found in and traced to the signal failure to distinguish between the revolution in colonial and semi-colonial counties and those of independent, capitalist, imperialist countries. From this naturally follows the mechanical deduction of the class roles.

Let us quote an illuminating passage from Stalin which drives home the point.

“The fundamental mistake of the opposition (i.e. the Trotskyite-Zinovievite opposition) is that they do not understand and will not admit this difference between the one type of revolution and the other type of revolution.

“The fundamental mistake of the opposition is that they identify the 1905 revolution in Russia, an imperialist country, which oppressed other peoples, with the revolution in China, an oppressed country, a semi-colonial country, which is forced to resist the imperialist oppression of other states.

“With us in Russia in 1905, the revolution was directed against the bourgeoisie, against the liberal bourgeoisie, in spite of the fact that it was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Why? Because the liberal bourgeoisie of an imperialist country is bound to be counter-revolutionary. And that is why the Bolsheviks at that time did not and could not consider temporary blocs and agreements with the liberal bourgeoisie. On these grounds the opposition assert that the same attitude should be adopted in China in all stages of revolutionary movement, and that temporary agreements and blocs with national bourgeoisie in China are impermissible at all times and under all circumstances. But the opposition forget that only people who do not understand and will not admit that there is a difference between revolution in oppressed countries and revolution in oppressor countries can talk like this, that only people who are forsaking Leninism and joining the followers of the Second International can talk like this.

“This is what Lenin said as to the permissibility of temporary agreements and blocs with bourgeois-liberation movement in colonial countries:

‘The Communist International must join in a temporary alliance with the bourgeois-democrats of the colonies and backward countries, but not merge with them, and must unconditionally preserve the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in a quite incipient form’ (“Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions”).

‘...we, as communists, should and will support the bourgeois-liberation movements in the colonial countries only when these movements are truly revolutionary movements, and when their representatives will not hamper us in educating and organising the peasantry and the masses of the exploited in the revolutionary spirit’ (“Report of the Commission on the National and the Colonial Questions”).

“How does it ‘happen’ that Lenin, who fulminated against agreements with the bourgeoisie in Russia regarded such agreements and blocs as permissible in China? Perhaps Lenin made a mistake? Perhaps he turned from revolutionary tactics

to opportunist tactics? Of course not. It 'happened' because Lenin understood the difference between revolution in an oppressed country and revolution in an oppressor country. It 'happened' because Lenin understood that a certain stage of its development the national bourgeoisie in the colonial countries may support the revolutionary movement of its country against foreign imperialism. This is what the opposition do not want to understand; and they do not want to understand it because they are breaking with the revolutionary tactics of Lenin, because they are breaking with the revolutionary tactics of Leninism.

'Have you observed how carefully the leaders of the opposition in their speeches evaded these directions of Lenin's, how they feared to refer to them in spite of the fact that Bukharin in his report bluntly confronted them with these directions of Lenin? Why then do they evade these wellknown directions given by Lenin on tactics in relation to the colonial and dependent countries? Why do they fear these directions? Because they fear the truth. Because Lenin's directions on tactics refute the whole ideological and political position of trotskyism on the problems of the Chinese revolution.'" ("China", *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*).

Further Stalin says, in his "Address to the Students of the University of the Toilers of the East", referring to the tasks of the Communist Party of India:

"But the communist party can and must enter into an open bloc with the revolutionary wing of the bourgeoisie in order, after having isolated the compromising national bourgeoisie, to lead the vast masses of the urban and rural petty-bourgeoisie in the fight against imperialism."

What does Stalin mean by the revolutionary wing of the bourgeoisie here? Evidently he is discussing this point in connection with the compromising Indian big bourgeoisie and its collaboration with imperialism. This analysis of Stalin's, made as early as 1925, still holds good in its basic essentials. Of course after this analysis a great many changes have taken place, i.e. the rise of fascism and the consequent changes in the strategy, tactics of Communist International, which are expressed through

the resolutions of the seventh congress of the Communist International, etc. If till now the Indian big bourgeoisie, in spite of a whole chain of betrayals and capitulation before imperialism (every time the mass movement rose to a pitch when it threatened to go out of its control and endanger its narrow class interests—as during 1918-22, during 1930-32, etc.), represented some opposition to imperialism, then at the present time it has completely and openly gone over to imperialism and its collaboration is final, with the acceptance of the Mountbatten award. The “revolutionary wing of the bourgeoisie” of whom Stalin was speaking then is evidently the middle bourgeoisie about whom the Soviet and Chinese writers speak of today.

Yet, the pity is, our polit bureau even as late as February 1950 publishes this speech of Stalin with a misleading introductory note, as though in justification of its sectarian line but clean misses to spotlight the above passage that has a direct bearing on our strategy today. Mind you, this is after the Peaking conference of trade unions of Asian and Australian countries is held and after the appearance of Liu Shao-chi's opening speech therein and of the summary of the manifesto published in the organ of the Cominform bureau, which in their nature are more than enough to make the polit bureau rethink seriously on these issues.

### **AGRARIAN QUESTION**

Thus we see the signal failure of the polit bureau even to utilise the international documents. It cannot be otherwise when one is sunk neck-deep in left-deviation.

The document on the agrarian question by the polit bureau is one that by its nature constitutes one of the most important documents. Its importance lies in two ways. Firstly, the peasant question is a vital question for the proletariat in its struggle for power. Not only that, in the specific case of India, because of its colonial and semi-colonial character, its importance is all the greater and in certain respects it becomes the main question. The correctness or otherwise of the analysis on the agrarian question has a profound bearing on the entire course of our revolution. Secondly, the importance of a critical examination

of this document becomes all the more significant in view of the fundamental departures it makes both from the position of the political theses and the documents of the Communist International.

The document of the polit bureau, *On the Agrarian Question in India*, starts with a basic departure from the analysis made in the political theses, which is based on the analysis of the colonial theses of the sixth congress of the Communist International.

What does its supposed "fundamental reestimate" boil down to?

It is this: the theses of the Communist International twenty years ago sharply emphasised that precapitalist and feudal forms of exploitation and relations on land are dominant, though capitalist relations are steadily growing. But now, after 20 years of mighty changes, it is the other way about. The capitalist relations have become dominant, though feudal exploitation in varied forms "still exists"!

Thus at one stroke the polit bureau attempts to revise the world Marxist understanding on the colonial-agrarian question.

What is the understanding given by the Communist International? It states in clear and unambiguous terms that as long as imperialists keep the colonies "as markets for their commodities, as sources of raw material and as spheres for the export of capital", the basic structure of colonial agrarian economy, i.e. "feudal and precapitalist forms of domination", will not change.

Further it emphasises the fact that despite "the carrying through of the minimum constructive activity (railways, harbours, etc.)", the "peasant economy is thereby by no means liberated from the oppression of its precapitalist features", and that "in final analysis, (all this) leads to an artificial retardation of the development of the productive forces in the colonies".

The polit bureau, by advancing arguments all and sundry, attempts at a basic revision of this world Marxist understanding by asserting that capitalist relations have become dominant instead of precapitalist relations!

What does this revision amount to?

It knowingly or unknowingly provides material for the discredited theory of 'decolonisation'.



While showing the statistical figures of the growth of the agricultural labour class, the question "What is the significance of the rise of the agricultural workers?" is posed and answered.

This supposed "fundamental analysis of the peasant problem after that made in the colonial theses of the sixth congress of the Communist International" and the consequent political conclusions drawn from it have not only not enriched the formulations of Communist International, but on the contrary have miserably failed to grasp the basic lines of the Communist International formulations and made counterformulations of the trotskyist type. This revision has also led to wrong formulations of strategy and tactics.

First of all let us see what the theses of the Communist International have said on the peasant question in colonies and semi-colonies, the development of capitalist relations in agriculture, and prevailing feudal forms, etc., and thus find out the real difference between Communist International and our polit bureau on the issue.

The theses say:

"Capitalism, which has included the colonial village into its system of taxation and trade apparatus, and which has overturned precapitalist relations (for instance, destruction of the village commune), does not thereby liberate peasants from the yoke of precapitalist forms of bondage and exploitation, but only gives the latter a monetary expression (feudal services and rent in kind are partially replaced by money rent, while payment of taxes in kind is replaced by money taxes, and so on), which still more increase the suffering of the peasantry."

"Agriculture in the colonies is compelled to a considerable degree to work for export, but peasant economy is by no means liberated from the oppression of its precapitalist features. As a general rule, it is converted to a 'free' trading economy by means of the subordination of the precapitalist forms of production to the needs of the finance capital, the deepening of the precapitalist methods of exploitation, through subjection of the peasant economy to the yoke of rapidly developing trade and usury capital, the increase of tax burdens, etc."

Thus the Communist International analyses the penetration of capitalist relations into the countryside of colonies and semi-colonies and its effects.

Then is it not absolutely incorrect to say that the Communist International theses say only "feudal relations as dominant" and "also took note of the fact the situation would not be always so rigid and changes might take place", etc. thereby slyly suggesting that the Communist International had not taken into full consideration the growth of capitalist penetration and its effects? Is it not also incorrect to say that the Communist International expected that "situation would not be always so rigid and changes might take place", etc. and from there to deduce that the basic formulations of the Communist International on the agrarian question in the colonies have altered in spite of the fact that the colonial and semi-colonial setup continues to exist? The theses of the Communist International quite clearly and correctly saw the factor of penetration of capitalism into the colonial village and also drew proper conclusions from it. Whatever changes have taken place subsequent to the theses of the Communist International are not of such a character as to alter the basic formulations made in it as long as our country remains a colony and semi-colony.

The theses of the Communist International also very clearly pointed out the process of class differentiation of the peasantry. Here is what they say:

"The process of class differentiation of the peasantry in the colonies and semi-colonies which possess important relics of feudalism and precapitalist relationships, proceeds at a comparatively slow rate. Nevertheless market relationships in these countries have developed to such a degree that the peasantry no longer represent a homogeneous mass, as far as their class relations are concerned. In the villages of China and India, in particular certain parts of these countries, it is already possible to find exploiting elements derived from the peasantry, who exploit the peasants and village labourers through usury, trade, employment of hired labour, the sale or letting out of land on rent, the loaning of cattle or agricultural implements, etc."

Again, to show the growth of the agricultural labour class, the theses of the Communist International state thus:

"In India, China and Indonesia, the pauperisation of the peasantry has reached such a height that at the present time, the most characteristic figure in the village is the poor peasant, almost or entirely deprived of land and not infrequently suffering starvation."

"The many millions of starving tenant-cultivators, petty peasants oppressed by want and groaning under all kinds of precapitalist and capitalist forms of exploitation, a considerable portion of them deprived of the possibility of cultivation on the lands that they rent thrown out from the process of production and slowly dying from famine and disease, village agricultural labourers—all these are the allies of the proletariat in the village."

Emphasising the urgent task of the Communist Party of India to organise agricultural labour and cautioning to be vigilant not to allow the newly-organised peasants unions to fall under the leadership of exploiting strata in the village, the theses say:

"The miners and engineering workers, the coolies working on the plantations and agricultural labourers in general, represent the least organised sections of the Indian proletariat and the communists need to devote the necessary attention to them."

"It is essential to pay particular attention to make sure that the newly-created peasant organisations do not fall under the influence of the exploiting strata in the village."

In this connection, we would like to point out that the huge growth of agricultural proletariat in our country is noticed even by bourgeois economists like Radhakamal Mukerjee. In his book on Indian agriculture he gives the figures of agricultural labour as 40 to 50 per cent of the rural population as early as in 1930 (theses of the Communist International came out in 1928). It is we the members and leaders of the Communist Party of India who had woefully failed to grasp the analysis of this growth made by the Communist International and ignored, neglected and refused to organise the agricultural labour, except in one province, i.e. Andhra, in spite of a number of reformist mistakes there also. Now after the second party congress, in November-December 1948, we wake up like Rip Van Winkle and see the

growth of agricultural labour class; but we do so not to arrive at correct conclusions but with an audacity to revise the basic formulations of the theses of the Communist International, only to argue "that the theses of the Communist International saw the precapitalist and feudal relations dominant" and we discover that capitalist relations are dominant though feudal and precapitalist relations "still exist"!

Is this not another thrust into the colonial theses of the Communist International with the dagger of the infamous 'decolonisation thesis'?

When one attempts to analyse the present colonial countryside of ours from the Marxian point of view, it will be naive and stupid to try to find out whether the "classical feudal setup" is there or not. As a matter of fact, the 'classical' form will not be found in the greater part of the earth today, when every inch of the land on the surface of the globe has been brought under the iron rule of monopoly capitalism and modern imperialism. All that can be said is, as the theses of the Communist International state, that colonies and semi-colonies—where democratic revolution has not yet been carried out and where no *decisive* agrarian reforms can be carried out by the imperialists and collaborationist bourgeoisie put together, in this phase of world capitalism in decay—"possess important relics of feudalism and precapitalist relationships". It is from this aspect that the question of "anti-feudal" revolution or "agrarian revolution" or in the broad sense the "democratic revolution" comes on the agenda before the proletariat and its party, in its struggle to advance to the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism. Instead of understanding this position, it is foolish on our part to put the abstract mechanical question "whether feudal relations dominate or capitalist relations dominate in our countryside" and only to eclectically deduce from it that "capitalist relations dominate", and then to proceed that the present stage of our struggle is "mainly anti-capitalist" "though, of course, the still persisting feudal forms" need also to be liquidated, etc. Thus the "colonial liberation" aspect, the "agrarian revolution" aspect,

the aspect of liquidation of all feudal and precapitalist forms, get brushed aside as of "minor" importance or of no importance in certain respects. And then, finally, we land into masterly confusion on the present stage of our revolution saying that it is a "mixed" one, "delayed democratic revolution ripening into socialist revolution", that the "two stages, democratic and socialist, get mixed into one people's democratic revolution". etc., distorting the rich Leninist idea of "democratic revolution passing into socialist revolution" in support of such vulgarisation.

With these confused and wrong ideas one begins attacking all the clearheaded Marxist thinkers on the problem, starting right from Mao and the Communist Party of China down to any member of the central committee or any party member of our party who raised discussion on this issue.

To understand precisely what precapitalist or feudal relations mean, it will be good to refer to Lenin.

"Let us, however, finish what we have to say about the bourgeois-democratic content of our revolution. Marxists must understand what this means. To explain, we shall quote a few graphic examples.

"The bourgeois-democratic content of the revolution means that the social relations (systems and institution) of the country are purged of medievalism, serfdom, feudalism.

"What are the chief manifestations, survivals, remnants of serfdom in Russia up to 1917? The monarchy, the caste system, private landownership and land tenure, the inferior status of women, religion and national oppression. Take any one of these 'Augean stables', which, incidentally, were left largely uncleansed by all the more advanced states when they accomplished *their* bourgeois-democratic revolutions one hundred and twenty-five, two hundred and fifty and more years ago (1649 in England); take any of these Augean stables, and you will see that we have cleansed them thoroughly" ("Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution").

Have not precisely the above narrated precapitalist and feudal forms been pointed out by the theses of the Communist

International as present in our colonial and semi-colonial countries? Do not the expressions in the colonial theses and the programme of the Communist International such as “in the colonies and semi-colonies which possess important relics of feudalism and precapitalist relationships” and “with feudal medieval relationships,” or “Asiatic mode of production” relationships prevailing in their economies and in their political superstructures etc. mean that they are *dominant* in the absolute sense of the term? Is it not wrong to interpret these changing relationships in the rural side as development of capitalist relations without understanding the significance of the formulations of the Communist International? Do the economic changes of the last twenty years expressed in terms of class relations in our rural setup, i.e. the growth in the number of the agricultural labour and rich peasants, etc., warrant on our part, in the name of “new” and “fundamental analysis”, statements to the effect that the present rural setup “shows a reversal of old relations”, in contrast to the theses of the Communist International?

We are of the opinion that the analysis made by the polit bureau, in the name of discovering capitalist relations growing predominant, etc. is nothing but underestimating the significance of the anti-feudal struggle and of the agrarian revolution as the “axis of the colonial revolution”.

The subsequent formulations in the document of the polit bureau *On the Agrarian Question*— such as “the development of capitalist relations does not as yet mean that feudalism is dead”, “the rise of new capitalist methods of exploitation has only added to the exploitation without abolishing old burdens”, “at the same time (we must) see the tenacity of feudal relations, which though they are disintegrating, yet continue to exist and oppress the majority of the people” and “that feudal relations are still tenaciously persisting and they are still strong”, etc.— are formal and only form a background music without any correct bearing on the main conclusions drawn from the previous “new” “fundamental analysis”.

This can be seen from the other statements made in the document itself such as: “To conclude, feudalism is not dead despite development of capitalist relations” and “the main point

however to understand is, that the capitalist relations have developed inside the feudal framework, that they are developing with great speed and that in future they will develop with still greater rapidity", etc.

To say that feudalism is not yet 'dead', that capitalist relations are "developing with great speed", and will "develop with still greater rapidity", etc., is in reality failing to grasp the significance of feudal and precapitalist barriers in our country for social progress and advancement ; it is to give a clean alibi to those who argue on the basis of 'decolonisation' thesis that imperialism in the course of its own development complete the tasks of democratic revolution in colonies; and failure to understand that in the present period of final decay of world capitalism such development "with great speed" and "still greater rapidity" is sheer nonsense. It is an overestimation of the strength and potentiality of the present collaborationist setup; and underestimation of the significance of imperialist-feudal stranglehold on the country's economy today; and, as its counterpart and logical conclusion, follows the reformist political conclusion that the "national government" under Mountbatten award is a "step in advance". It is basing on such wrong logic that the polit bureau argues that though "August 15 independence" is not independence for the people of India, it is "independence" for the entire bourgeoisie of India for "unlimited exploitation" and expansion.

The collaborationist bourgeoisie is incapable only of "revolutionary liquidation of feudalism"; it is capable of "compelling" feudalism to "reform" itself, to suit its own advantage; it will "curb feudalism to suit its own interests"!

How wonderfully does the polit bureau fight reformism with such "Marxism" as this!

In world history, except in the French bourgeois-democratic revolution, nowhere was there revolutionary liquidation of feudalism by the bourgeoisie; English bourgeoisie had compromised with feudalism in one measure or other. German bourgeoisie had compromised with feudal junker landlord gang.

These compromises were not in the declining period of world capitalism. They were done even in the heyday of world capitalism. When we say the bourgeoisie of our times, or, more precisely, the colonial and collaborationist bourgeoisie, "compromises with feudalism or strengthens it", the only "Marxist meaning" is "not simply" that the bourgeoisie by its very class nature is "not consistently revolutionary". It means something more in the present day world and in our semi-colonial country in particular. Here is what the theses of the Communist International say on it:

"The poverty-stricken position of the peasantry denotes at the same time a crisis in the internal market for industry, which in its turn represents a powerful obstacle to the capitalist development of the country. Not only the national bourgeoisie of India, China, Egypt, etc., but also imperialism itself was sensible of this peasant misery as an obstacle in the path of expansion of their exploitation; but the economic and political interests of both of them are so closely bound up with large ownership, as also with trading and usury capital in village, that they are not in a position to carry through an agrarian reform of any wide significance."

"But just here is the weakest point of the colonial bourgeoisie. The unbearable exploitation of the colonial peasantry can only be put an end to by the way of agrarian revolution. The bourgeoisie of China, India and Egypt is by its immediate interests, so closely bound up with landlordism, with usury capital and with the exploitation of the peasant masses in general, that it takes its stand not only against the agrarian revolution but also against every decisive agrarian reform. It is afraid, and not without foundation, that even the more open formulation of the agrarian question will stimulate and accelerate the growth of the process of revolutionary fermentation in the peasant masses. Thus the reformist bourgeoisie hardly dares to decide to approach practically the basic urgent question."

Thus whereas the theses of the Communist International observe "powerful obstacles to the capitalist development" and "as an obstacle in the path of the expansion of their (bourgeois—



*Andhra Secretariat*) exploitation", the documents of the polit bureau discover capitalism as "developing with great speed" and as "developing with still greater rapidity" in future in the rural economy!

While the theses of the Communist International state that the Indian bourgeoisie is "not in a position to carry through an agrarian reform of any wide significance", that it is "against even the mere open formulation of the agrarian question", that it "hardly dare" to decide to approach practically this basic urgent question, and that it is "just here (that is seen—*Andhra Secretariat*) the weakest point of the colonial bourgeoisie", the document of the polit bureau says that the collaborationist Indian bourgeoisie will be able to "curb feudalism to suit its own interests" and "compel feudalism to reform to its own advantage".

The theses of the Communist International observe "the pitiful attempts (of the bourgeoisie—*Andhra Secretariat*) at carrying through of agrarian reforms without endangering the colonial regime" but our polit bureau finds bountiful agrarian reforms by the bourgeoisie that "emancipates the bourgeoisie, clears the way for the development of bourgeois relations to the extent necessary".

The theses of the Communist International state that the Indian bourgeoisie "is by its immediate interests, so closely bound up with landlordism, with usury capital", that the "economic and political interests of both (imperialism and national bourgeoisie—*Andhra Secretariat*) of them are so closely bound up with large ownership, as also with trading and usury capital in the village". The polit bureau calls this understanding as "wrong and mechanical understanding" on the ground that it "sees no contradiction between them and reduces the content of alliance to one of complete identity of economic interests". The theses of the Communist International emphasise the compromising nature of national bourgeoisie with feudal landowners for obvious reasons, but our polit bureau emphasises the contradictions between them as of great significance; and not only that, not to do this is silly according to the polit bureau!

Who is silly? The polit bureau or the Communist International and those that follow the teachings of the Communist International?

Thus the polit bureau, in its attempt at the "fundamental reestimate of the class relations in agrarian areas", revises the basic formulations of the Communist International, despite all its avowals of loyalty to the latter. It is not a question of slightly going right or left; the position of the polit bureau has nothing in common with, and is a complete repudiation of, the understanding given by the Communist International.

From the above stated position the polit bureau proceeds to evaluate the prospective land legislation of the Congress bourgeois governments in power. These bills are characterised thus: "The bourgeois programme bears a strange resemblance to the programme of the tsarist minister, Stolypin (*On the Agrarian Question*).

Here we do not set ourselves the task of analysing these so-called "land reform bills" of the Congress government though we realise the importance of the task of such penetrating analysis to expose and fight them in the concrete.

Our main contention for the present is that the so-called land bills, whether they have a "strange resemblance" to the Stolypin reforms or to the Kuomintang government's pompous announcements of agrarian reform, are basically only "empty nationalist phrases and gestures to keep the petty-bourgeois (peasants in particular) masses under its influence". The open and consistent opposition of the central government even to the many proposed "land reforms" of the provincial government, which by themselves are in reality only "landlord bills" of the worst reactionary type, is a pointer in this respect to understand the real attitude of the collaborationist bourgeoisie to agrarian reforms of any significance. The proposed "zamindari abolition bills" are already pigeonholed to a great extent and it would be a matter of time before they are thrown completely into the dustbins of the government secretariat's office, on the plea of government's inability to pay the proposed "compensation" amounting to hundreds of millions of rupees to the zamindars and the landlords.

The report of the agrarian inquiry committee, under the presidency of Kumarappa with his Gandhian fads, is itself being opposed by all

the bourgeois press as “utopian”, “unpractical” and “dangerous” too. The landlord representatives like Omandur Ramaswami Reddiar, the ex-premier of Madras, and N.G. Ranga, the president of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, have already come out openly in the press against the Kumarappa report attacking it tooth and nail. In fact these are the tendencies and the standpoint of the present collaborationist bourgeoisie on the “agrarian reforms” which are too often talked of and announced in the bourgeois press only to counteract the growing agrarian unrest in the country.

As far as Madras government is concerned, the proposed “zamindari abolition bill”, which is wholeheartedly supported even by the zamindari clique itself, is only a measure that is mainly intended to save the zamindars, who encounter agrarian revolts every day, who miserably fail to collect the taxes on land, facing the bitter resistance from the peasants, and who run bankrupt and fail to pay peshkush to the government.

If such is the reality, neither “phrasemongering and negative attitude which contents itself with saying that no change had been brought”, etc., nor the great expectations that the bourgeoisie by hook or crook will be able to “compel feudalism to reform to its own advantage”, “will curb feudalism to suit its own interests” and that “this process only emancipates the bourgeoisie, clears the way for the bourgeois relations to the extent necessary”, etc., will get us anywhere near the truth. The one is abstract denunciation and failure to expose the collaborationist bourgeoisie and its demagoguery in concrete to the peasant masses; the other is overestimation of the contradictions between the collaborationist bourgeoisie and the feudal, semi-feudal, precapitalist interests, and failure to understand the weakness of the colonial bourgeoisie particularly in this phase of decaying capitalism all the world over, thus running into reformist conclusions.

It is appropriate to quote here Stalin’s observation regarding China. “In China”, Stalin says, “there is not yet any group or, government capable of carrying out reforms similar to Stolypin’s which will serve as a lightning conductor for the ruling group” (“On Current Affairs: On China”). The estimation and evaluation by the polit bureau of the much-advertised “agrarian reform” is wrong, and mainly based on the “pious wishes” and pompous bills of the Congress bourgeoisie rather than on the real objective realities as such.

### **Re : Rich Peasant**

Now let us proceed to discuss the question of the rich peasant.

First of all, rich peasant is placed by the polit bureau in the counter-revolutionary camp on the plea that the entire bourgeoisie has collaborated with imperialism, and the rich peasant, i.e. the peasant bourgeoisie, is also included in it.

Secondly, the polit bureau denies the anti-feudal role of the rich peasant in democratic and agrarian revolution as absurd and meaningless.

Thirdly, the rich peasant is described as “the spearhead of counter-revolution in the rural side”.

Fourthly, the polit bureau rejects the necessity of making distinction between the landlord and the rich peasant, and takes up cudgels against those that make such a distinction.

Lastly, while the political thesis left a loophole by containing the slogan of khas lands of the rich peasant, the polit bureau in line with its whole bankrupt analysis advanced to the logical end along the wrong path and put forward the slogan of confiscation of the land of the rich peasants along with that of the landlord.

Let us elaborate these points, one by one.

(1) The polit bureau arrived at the role of the rich peasant in the people's democratic revolution in India, rather in a wonderfully ingenious way from Zhdanov's report. Zhdanov's report was supposed to mean, according to the polit bureau, that in the present international situation, nowhere in the world, in no country, at no stage of the revolution, can any section of the bourgeoisie including the rich peasant find a place in the revolutionary and democratic camp. Basing itself on this—its own—misinterpretation, it works up the following arguments—each outbeating the other in demagoguery: How can rich peasants, even in feudal areas, really play an anti-feudal role when the entire bourgeoisie wants to compromise and enter into an alliance against the masses; when their leader the industrial bourgeoisie has signed a new alliance with feudalism and when consistently fighting against the feudal elements creates danger for the rich peasants also at the hands of the masses? How can all this happen when the class antagonism between the exploiters and exploited has reach such higher proportions?

Is it not amazing that such arguments flow from the pen of the polit bureau?

The statement that the entire bourgeoisie has collaborated, and hence this means the collaboration of the rich peasant, as peasant bourgeois, also is more an arbitrary assertion rather than an objective analysis.

The question is asked, how can the rich peasant go against his leader, the industrial bourgeoisie? The "leadership" in this case does not come so easily as our polit bureau thinks. The anti-feudal and anti-imperialist interests of the rich peasant are not fulfilled by the supposed leader, with his collaboration with feudalism and imperialism. Hence for a while, during certain stage, the proletariat can lead him and become the leader, unless it refuses to lead him in the revolution and makes a present of him to the reactionary combine.

Why has the polit bureau introduced the idea of "consistently fighting against feudal elements"? Has anybody ever said that the rich peasant would "consistently" fight the feudal elements? Does it mean that the polit bureau is laying a dictum that the proletariat should ally itself with only those classes and sections that "consistently" fight along with it? Is it not a fact that in the era of imperialism, the proletariat in its struggle for power at different stages and in different countries has to ally itself with different classes and sections, some of whom are undoubtedly inconsistent by their very class nature?

To speak of "consistency" or otherwise without reference to stage and tasks has nothing to do with Marxism.

It is against such left phrasemongering that Lenin delivers a stern admonition and lays down the following pregnant dictum:

"The more powerful enemy can be conquered only by exerting the utmost effort, and by necessarily, thoroughly, carefully, attentively, and skilfully, taking advantage of every, even the smallest, 'rift' among the enemies, of every antagonism of interest among the bourgeoisie of the various countries and among the various groups of types of bourgeoisie within the various countries, and also by taking advantage of every, even the smallest, opportunity of gaining a mass ally, even though this ally be temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional."

And: "Those who do not understand this do not understand even a particle of Marxism or of scientific, modern socialism in general" (*"Left-Wing" Communism*).

This abundantly rich enunciation is more than enough to drive the point home.

On top of it all, the polit bureau puts the question: "How can all this happen when the class antagonism between the exploiters and the exploited has reached such higher proportions?" What does it mean thereby? Is it not once again to bring in here its bankrupt understanding that in the present day world only one contradiction, the contradiction between labour and capital, remains and that the rest of the contradiction lose all significance with regard to and have no bearing on, the question of strategy and tactics, etc.—an understanding that runs like a red thread throughout the writings the polit bureau?

The polit bureau also advances the arguments to prove that the oppositional and anti-feudal role of the rich peasant in India is once for all finished.

Not a single one of the arguments and points made out by the polit bureau to place the rich peasant outside the democratic front, at this stage of the revolution, has anything to do with Marxism-Leninism. It is nothing but subjectivism and a shamefaced attempt at revision of all the accepted Marxist tenets on this question.

(2) *No Antifeudal Role?* When the Andhra secretariat, in its *Draft Note*, had cited from its own experience the revolutionary role of the rich peasant in the struggle against the nizam's feudal autocracy, the polit bureau offers its criticism.

It denies what is a reality and a fact. Secondly, it denies the very anti-feudal character and role of the rich peasant. It is one thing if the polit bureau had said that we had failed to observe the principle of "March separately and strike together" and that while allowing the rich peasant to remain in our camp, the task of keeping vigilant with regard to him, of exposing him, which had to be done simultaneously, had been ignored, etc. But it is quite another thing when it summarily rejects the fact altogether, stating "The documents (Andhra documents) say that this has been proved in Telangana. In reality, no such proof exists."

So let us first examine whether the rich peasant's participation in the anti-nizam struggle is a fact or not.

The agrarian struggle in Telangana reached the stage of armed resistance as early as the beginning of 1946 itself, i.e. one and a half years before "August 15 independence", and two and a half years before the counter-revolutionary intervention of the Indian Union armies, which culminated in the complete collaboration of the Nehru government and the nizam. If in the fight against the nizam's autocracy and against the jagirdar, deshmukh and landlord zoolum and the heinous feudal exploiting methods, like begar, vetti, etc., the rich peasant was not interested in participating, we are at a loss to understand how the rich peasant was considered by Lenin and Stalin as an ally in the pre-February stage of the Russian revolution, when the strategic slogan was "dictatorship of workers and peasants"—including the rich peasantry! The point however is that the polit bureau merely wants to assert away a fact, i.e. the rich peasant's participation in the anti-nizam struggle, when in fact it was not only the rich peasant but the entire bourgeoisie in Hyderabad state also who were in opposition to the feudal nizam, in one measure or other, when the compromise between the nizam and the Indian government had not yet come off.

Is the rich peasant objectively interested in the struggle against feudalism? The polit bureau says "No".

The documents of the polit bureau, while on the one hand they rebuke those who "underestimate" the contradictions (contradictions between the collaborationist bourgeoisie and feudal and semifeudal elements!), "practically equating the bourgeoisie to the feudal elements" on the other, jump to the other end and call the conflicts between the rich peasantry and feudalism as rich peasant's "critical attitude to feudalism" since he is "not averse to curb the power" of the feudal landlord, "especially if it could be done by others", as "just sympathy of rich peasants in partial struggle now and then and in initial stage—which is quite conceivable just as one factory owner may sometimes support financially the strikers of another factory".

With this comparison of the conflict between rich peasant and feudal landlordism with the factional struggle between different

factory owners, the polit bureau has reached the height of its bankruptcy.

Stalin in his letter to Yansky and Pokrovsky explains the implications of the following formulations of Lenin, when both of them began to confuse the question of Bolshevik strategy in the February and October stages of Russian revolution:

"It is therefore clear that our constructive work in the rural districts has now gone beyond the limits to which it was confined when everything was subordinated to the fundamental demand of the struggle for power.

"This constructive work passed through two main phases. In October 1917, we seized power *together with the peasantry as a whole*. This was a bourgeois revolution, in as much as the class war in rural districts had not yet developed," etc. ("Work in the Rural Districts").

"When we took power we relied on the support of the peasantry as a whole. At that time, the aim of all the peasants was identical—to fight the landlords" (Ibid.).

Yansky and Pokrovsky, who failed to understand the "special conditions" and "complicated" combinations in the two stages of the Russian revolution, began to argue that the strategy remained one and the same in both the February and October revolutions. Stalin, while pinning down their mistakes, discussed the nature of the support, opposition, etc. of the rich peasantry in October revolution. This is of immense use for the clarification of the issue in discussion.

"... and in as much as the October Revolution did complete the bourgeois revolution, it was bound to meet with the sympathy of all the peasants. All that is undeniable...("Letter to Yansky"). "When the peasantry as a whole was faced with the danger of the restoration of the power of the landlords, and when the peasantry as a *whole* was compelled to rally around the Soviet power in order to ensure the completion of bourgeois revolution and preserve the fruits of revolution ("Party's Three Fundamental Slogans on Peasant Problem").

"That we took power with a *certain amount* of the support from the peasantry as a whole is quite true. But you forget to add a 'detail',



namely, that the peasantry *as a whole* supported us in October and after, only *in so far* as we carried the bourgeois revolution to completion... Indeed, why did we succeed in securing the support of the peasantry as a whole in October and after October? Because we were in a position to carry the bourgeois revolution to completion" ("Slogan of Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Poor Peasantry").

Do not these formulations of Stalin indicate that the "rich peasantry" is also interested in the carrying out of the bourgeois-democratic tasks? We feel that the understanding of the polit bureau on this question is completely wrong.

The October Revolution was a proletarian socialist revolution, in spite of the fact that it had to complete a lot of bourgeois - democratic tasks, in that its strategy aims at the overthrow of "entire capitalism including the rural rich, the kulaks and the profiteers". The rich peasant in the main was considered as one of the enemies to be overthrown politically and as such it was meaningless to talk of his position in the strategical alliance of the proletariat in that stage. That is why Stalin argued thus: "Does not the achievement of the dictatorship of the proletariat mean going beyond the framework of bourgeois revolution? How can you assert that the kulaks (who of course are also peasants) could support the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the transfer of power to the proletariat? How can you deny that the decree of nationalisation of the land, abolition of private property in land, the prohibition of the purchase and sale of land, etc. in spite of the fact that it cannot be regarded as a socialist decree, was put into effect by us in the midst of *struggle against* the kulaks, and not in alliance with them? How can you assert that the kulaks (who are also peasants) could support the decrees of the Soviet government on the expropriation of mills, factories, railways, banks, etc., or the slogan of the proletariat in transforming the imperialist war into civil war? How can you assert that the *fundamental* thing in October was not these and similar acts, not the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of dictatorship of the proletariat, but the completion of bourgeois revolution" ("Party's Three Fundamental Slogans" etc.).

If the *fundamental thing* in the present revolution for India also is the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship and completion

of the bourgeois-democratic revolution is only "one of the main tasks" as in October Russian revolution, then the strategy is clear and the place of the rich peasant is no longer a complicated question for us. But as the Andhra secretariat understood while writing its draft in discussion now, the fundamental thing in our revolution is the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, though as Lenin said the "individual particular elements of the one revolution and the other become inter-woven", i.e. in our specific case confiscation of the concerns owned by the imperialists and nationalisation of key industry, etc. would definitely overstep the bounds of the democratic revolution and "will grow into proletarian revolution". The aspect of national liberation and the "aspect of the anti-feudal and anti-landlord struggle" are not considered simply as "byproducts" of our present revolution. Undoubtedly our revolution is basically democratic. The documents of the polit bureau instead of understanding the real issue in discussion, summarily dispose of the point as "reformist" and "collaborationist", etc.

We are prompted to ask question. Why was the Russian rich peasant interested in the bourgeois-democratic revolution and its general tasks even after the Stolypin reforms (incidentally it is to be noted that it was after the Stolypin reforms that the rich peasants in Russia could be our ally in the February revolution and lend a "certain amount" of support in the October revolution also). Whereas the present land bills of the Congress governments which are said to bear "strange resemblance to Stolypin reforms" are considered by our polit bureau to be such as would "emancipate" the rich peasant from feudal and landlord fetters? Is there anything special in our country which makes the rich peasant an ally of feudal-landlord reaction? Is it not evident from all the above that the rich peasant is objectively interested in the anti-feudal revolution?

At the meeting of the central committee of Hungarian Workers' Party held on 5 and 6 March, Rakosi, the General Secretary of the party, made the following observation: "Rakosi noted that the Hungarian Communist Party had followed the Lenin-Stalin teaching: after the liberation of the country, the party together with the peasantry, including the kulak, fought against the feudal landowners. But once this task was

completed, the kulaks turned against the communists" (*For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy*, 15 March 1949).

This was possible under the people's democratic republic in which, according to the polit bureau, there was no place for the "bourgeoisie" at any stage and in a country like Hungary, which was described in the programme of the Communist International as a "medium developed capitalist one", where "numerous survivals of semi-feudal relationships in agriculture", etc. exist. Then, why in our country, which is semicolonial, with feudal medieval relationships or "Asiatic mode of production in relationships prevailing", does the polit bureau dismiss the fact of the rich peasant's participation even in the anti-feudal struggle against the nizam's autocracy as a lie, saying "in reality no such proof exists"? Does the polit bureau proceed on the basis of actual class relations in our countryside or of the imaginary and clumsy theoretical analysis of its own?

Then again the colonial theses of the sixth congress of the Communist International state the following :

"In general, it is possible that, in the first period of the struggle of the peasantry against the landlords, the proletariat may be able to carry with it the entire peasantry" (including the rich peasantry—*Andhra secretariat*).

Has the polit bureau taken serious note of this passage at all? Does the polit bureau think that the "first period" of struggle against the landlords is already completed in our country, while in fact not even a countrywide beginning of it has been made? For the polit bureau, not only to have failed to take note of the anti-feudal role of the rich peasant, but also go to the extent of totally denying this classical concept—is it not a crime of the highest magnitude?

(3) *Rich Peasant, Spearhead of Reaction?* Not satisfied with having put the rich peasant outside the democratic front, with having denied him any anti-feudal and anti-imperialist role, the polit bureau goes further and makes him the spearhead of reaction in the countryside. Here is what the polit bureau says: "In all this, where does the rich peasant, peasant bourgeoisie stand? Does he vacillate? Can he be neutralised? No. He is one of the main enemies in the rural areas"—in fact, the spearhead of bourgeois-feudal reaction in rural areas" (*On the Agrarian Question*).

Everywhere in the world revolutionary history, the rich peasantry became the "spearhead of the counter-revolution" only after feudalism and landlordism were liquidated, but, according to our polit bureau documents, it becomes the spearhead of counter-revolution during the stage of the agrarian democratic revolution itself!

Does the polit bureau bother to understand what it is talking and of which class it is thinking? Is it elementary Marxism to talk of rich peasant as "spearhead of counter-revolution in the countryside" in the stage of basically democratic revolution as ours is necessarily at present? It is only bungling on the stage of the revolution and the class roles in the rural side that can land anybody into this ultra leftism.

(4) *No Distinction Between Landlord And Rich Peasant?* The polit bureau finds fault with the Andhra secretariat for having drawn, in its *Draft Note* a distinction between the landlord and the rich peasant. To quote: "Thus through this definition an attempt is made to repudiate ...collaborationist with the most ruthless exploiters."

Has this lumping together, this identifying of the rich peasant with the landlord, anything to do with Leninist principles? In his classification of the peasantry in his preliminary draft theses on the agrarian question does not Lenin place the rich peasant in a category different from that of the landlord-feudal and capitalist?

This is what Lenin says:

"However, expropriation even of the big peasants certainly cannot be made an immediate task of the victorious proletariat, for the material, in particular the technical conditions, as well as social conditions for the socialisation of such farms are still lacking. In individual, and probably exceptional cases, those parts of their land which they rent out in small plots, or which are particularly needed by the surrounding small peasants population will be confiscated: the small peasants will also be guaranteed, on certain terms, the free use of part of agricultural machines belonging to the rich peasants, etc. As a general rule, however, the proletarian state must allow the big peasants to retain their land, confiscating it only if they resist the power of the toilers and the exploited. The experience of the Russian proletarian revolution in which the fight against the big peasantry was complicated and protracted by a number of special

conditions, nevertheless shows that, when taught a severe lesson for the slightest attempt at resistance, this stratum is capable of loyally fulfilling the requirements of the proletarian state, and even begins to be imbued, although very slowly, with respect for the government which protects all who work and is ruthless towards the idle rich" ("Preliminary Draft of Theses on the Agrarian Question").

Lenin, in his report to the eighth congress of the CPSU(B) on the "Work in the Rural Districts" had occasion to make certain other generalisations on the same lines as described above. Lenin, while quoting Engels who said "Perhaps it will not everywhere be necessary to suppress even the big peasantry by force", observes thus: "Even in regard to reach peasants, we are not as decisive as we are in regard to bourgeoisie; we do not demand the absolute expropriation of the rich peasants and the kulaks. This distinction is made in our programme. We say that the resistance and the counter-revolutionary efforts of the rich peasants must be suppressed. This is not complete expropriation."

Thus it is necessary to make a distinction between the rich peasant and the landlord. It is axiomatic, generally in bourgeois -democratic revolution, i.e. agrarian revolution, we confine ourselves to and mainly strike against all types of landlordism. That has been so with all the democratic revolutions so far in history. Even in Chinese people's democratic revolution, the rich peasants class that is liquidated is what is described as "the old type" rich peasantry, i.e. rich peasant with feudal tails, who is defined as heavily feudal-ridden and major part of whose exploitation is feudal, as given by the Communist Party of China as a special feature in China. Of course we too have to find out if any such sections exist in our country also.

Secondly, Lenin, while insisting that "the revolutionary proletariat, must immediately and unreservedly confiscate all the land of the landlords", observes that "we do not demand the expropriation of the rich peasants and the kulaks". And even in the stage when we have to expropriate the rich peasants, we "do not demand absolute expropriation..."

Thirdly, Lenin lays down, even in the socialist revolution, in regard to the rich peasants, "we are not as decisive as we are in regard to bourgeoisie".

To sum up: we must make distinction in regard to rich peasant not only as against the landlord, but even as against the bourgeoisie, even in the stage of the proletarian revolution. This is the Leninist position.

Lastly, unlike the landlord who does no manual labour and lives merely on parasitic exploitation, the rich peasant not only exploits labour but also does manual labour. This manual labour, as the Chinese documents define, is in the nature of "principle labour" not secondary or subsidiary.

This is why this distinction is made in the Bolshevik programme.

Why does the polit bureau set at nought all this Leninist teaching on this question and assert that "there is no reason for this distinction"? This distinction is necessary for both strategical and tactical approach to the rich peasantry in different stage of our revolution.

(5) *Rich Peasants' Land To Be Confiscated along with the Landlords?* The slogan of "khas lands of the rich peasant to be confiscated" is no doubt incorporated in the political thesis. But in connection with this one point needs to be mentioned here. Due to the fact that at the party congress hundreds of amendments came in from the delegates and all these could not be taken up at the congress itself for lack of time, they were examined by an amendments committee. Regarding this particular point about the confiscation of the khas land of the rich peasant, this amendment was put forward by some delegates but the amendments committee recommended to the central committee and to the drafting commission to reject this amendment. Despite this the drafting commission incorporated it in the final thesis which emerged out of their hands.

Again after the controversy on the question of the rich peasant and the expropriation of his land is raised by the Andhra secretariat, the polit bureau in its subsequent documents advanced still further along the wrong path and issued the slogan of confiscation of the rich peasant's lands along with the landlord's.

First of all, let us examine what the term khas means. As far as we understand, this is used for "privately cultivated" part of lands of zamindars, mokhasadars, etc. But if the same connotation is applied in the case of the rich peasant particularly in roytwari areas,

it amounts to confiscating all his land, because generally he possesses none other. We do not know how the position would be in other provinces in India as regards the application of this slogan. But anyway this must be characterised as a slip.

One can understand the standpoint of the polit bureau if it were to say that "In individual, and probably exceptional, cases, those part of their (rich peasant— *Andhra secretariat*) land which they rent out in small plots, or which are particularly needed by the surrounding small peasant population will be confiscated", or "confiscating it only if they resist the power of the toilers and the exploited". This would be correct position even in case the present stage of our struggle is a struggle against the entire capital, including the rich peasant.

It can also be understood if the polit bureau were to advance the slogan on the line of the Communist Party of China to liquidate the rich peasant with feudal tails, because, it would form part of our consistent struggle against feudalism.

But the slogan of confiscation of khas lands, as advanced in the thesis and extended by the polit bureau in its *Agrarian Question*, to the entire land has no theoretical basis whatsoever and is totally wrong.

#### **Re: Slogan 'Nationalisation of Land'**

The document of the polit bureau *On the Agrarian Question* makes certain remarks about the omission of this slogan in our earlier programme.

But, in doing so, does it take into consideration the experience before us, or atleast put itself the question why many brother communist parties like the Communist Party of China and parties in the East European people's democracies have dropped this slogan from their programme and adopted other intermediary slogans and measures which in process lead to realise that slogan? It does neither.

Further, the information goes, that the Chinese Communist Party's agrarian laws, "not only permit private ownership but also free management and sale of land".

In East European democracies this land question is dealt with differently. The position after full four years of their establishment is as follows: "The solution of the agrarian problem in the countries of people's democracy *substantially differs* from its solution in the

Soviet Union... In the countries of people's democracy, however, private property on land exists at present, which represents additional possibilities for the development of capitalist elements in the villages" (*Tass News and Views*, bulletin dated 30 September 1949).

The document of the polit bureau *On the Agrarian Question* makes the following statement on the question of nationalisation of land. As far as our experience goes in our province they do not correspond to the realities at present. This slogan is said to be revolutionary slogan for ryotwari areas: "Actually the ryotwari areas had no slogan of revolutionary transformation all these days."

"Will it be a rallying slogan? Will it galvanise the rural masses? It will definitely do so. Because, the basic masses of the rural population on which we have to rely are the proletarian and the semi-proletarian elements—the agricultural labour and poor peasants who have been and are being rapidly expropriated because of private property in land."

The argument that "basic masses of the rural population on which we have to rely are the proletarian and the semiproletarian elements" is nothing special to India. It holds good with all the countries of people's democracies, including China.

While the document on side says that this slogan of nationalisation of land does not go down the throats of the middle peasant easily "because he desperately clings to the illusions of small property holder", etc. it straightaway jumps to the other side and argues that "the masses have seen that under present property relations, they have been expropriated" and that "life itself is proving to them that all private property— whether feudal or bourgeois, whether landlord or smallscale peasant property— leads to expropriation of the peasant—it means property of exploiting classes", etc.

Can unreal and imaginary estimation of the situation go further? We would like to ask the polit bureau in which part of the country this mass peasant consciousness is supposed to have reached such heights, that it is not only against feudal property relations but against even capitalist relations, i.e. small property relations too—at present? Neither our past work in the rural side, nor reports reaching our hands from any part of the country can provide us with such 'optimism'.



Further, it is amazing to say that this slogan is a "galvanising" one in the ryotwari areas. It is exactly in these areas private property interests and instincts are developed stronger than in comparatively more feudal-ridden areas, and that both the poor and the middle peasant sections, violently react against this slogan. It is precisely because of this that the programme of the Communist International gives the following warning: "The complete abolition of private property in land, and the nationalisation of the land cannot be brought about immediately in the more developed capitalist countries, where the principle of private property is deep rooted among a broad strata of the peasantry. In such countries, the nationalisation of all land can only be brought about gradually, by means of a series of transitional measures."

On one hand, in the name of a "new" and "fundamental reestimate of class relations in agrarian areas" the polit bureau departs from the colonial theses, revising every basic formulation of it, on the other, when the polit bureau goes to and in so far as it does borrow from the theses of the Communist International, i.e. the slogan of nationalisation of land, it does so opportunistically and mechanically. Why does the polit bureau do this? Is it because it suits leftism? Why is the polit bureau not otherwise consistent even in its own line? On the one hand, it flies full length and declares that capitalist land relations dominate over feudal land relations in our country. On the other, it does not apply the Stalinist warning in regard to nationalisation of lands to its own analysis!

Let us see what the warning of Stalin is: as stated by P. Yudin, in his review of the eleventh volume of the *works* of Stalin published in the *Communist* No. 1 of 1950:

"Comrade Stalin clearly foresaw the ways of solving the land problem in countries which would cast loose from the imperialist system. In reply to those who insisted upon the nationalisation of the land, especially, in capitalistically developed countries, Comrade Stalin, in his speech on 'The Programme of the Comintern', said:

"Those comrades are wrong who think that the more capitalistically developed a country is, the easier will it be to carry through the nationalisation of *all* the land there. On the contrary, the more capitalistically developed a country is, the more difficult

will it be to carry through the nationalisation of all the land, because the traditions of private ownership of land are all the stronger there, and the more difficult will it be, consequently, to combat these tradition.'

Comrade Stalin, therefore, warned that nationalisation of the land must not be proclaimed at once on the very first day of proletarian revolution, because the peasantry, imbued as it is with the property instinct, will not at once be able to digest this slogan. It is by this wise policy of Stalin that the communist and workers' parties in the people's democracies are guiding themselves today, gradually preparing the labouring peasant for collective forms of agriculture and production."

The idea of nationalisation is generally associated with the masses as complete expropriation of the rights of private property —as one that takes away their rights of free use, sale, etc. Besides this, the bourgeois-imperialist scare-propaganda of anti-communism, which plays on the private property instincts of the small proprietors, has added to the fears of these sections. It is for us to take this into serious consideration when we raise such a slogan, so that we foil the attempts of the class enemy who is bent upon disrupting the toilers front by driving a wedge between the small proprietors and the proletariat. Any attempt on our part to outrun the consciousness of the masses will prove terribly disruptive.

The stand that "the basic masses of the rural population on which we have to rely are the proletarian and semi- proletarian elements" and hence we need not worry to issue this slogan, does not lead us anywhere. The poor and the middle peasant population put together at present will be more than 30-40 per cent of the rural population. The slogan that does not help us to win these sections for the democratic front and only scares them away for different reasons as stated above, only isolates the "basic classes" from the rest of the toilers, and helps the enemy to defeat the revolution.

If such is the case, would it not be imperative that we do not push this slogan as it is and instead follow the course adopted by other brother communist parties in the new democracies and China?

## **Re: The Role Of Middle Peasant**

As far as the role of the middle peasant is concerned the polit bureau documents take an anomalous position. Describing his vacillations in the people's democratic revolution the document of the polit bureau says: "But at the same time, he vacillates because ..but also against the feudal landlords."

"There is no doubt that initially his vacillations will be very big: incited by the rich peasant, he may be hostile." "The middle peasant vacillates most:... His vacillations will be, therefore, of the most violent type".

Mark you, these statements are made after delivering a long attack on the formulation "middle peasant is a firm ally" in the revolution, alleged to have been made by the Andhra secretariat in its *Draft Note*!

After all this is said, the polit bureau adds that "And yet he can be won over;... win him over would prove fatal."

The positive assertion loses all its significance by profuse negative statements made against the middle peasant's role in the new democratic revolution. And exactly this constitutes the anomaly.

Let us elaborate this point.

It is classical Leninist position that the middle peasant vacillates in the fight between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. His vacillations come precisely because he as a property owner swings to the side of the bourgeoisie, and as a toiler swings over to the side of the proletariat. Hence Lenin in his "Preliminary Draft Theses on the Agrarian Question" asks the communist parties to follow this dictum:

"The revolutionary proletariat cannot set itself the task—at least in the immediate future and in the initial period of the dictatorship of the proletariat—of winning over this stratum, but must confine itself to the task of neutralising it, i.e. making it neutral in the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie".

To be clear, this is stated in relation to the stage of the socialist revolution.

What we set down to discuss is not about the middle peasant's role in the socialist stage and the proletarian revolution. It spells bankruptcy for a Marxist simply to paraphrase the above and apply

it verbatim to the present stage of people's democratic revolution. Why? Because the fight today is not a straight fight between proletarians and semi-proletarians on one side and all the bourgeoisie, including the rich peasants, on the other. The stranglehold of imperialism, the dominant feudal forms of exploitation, etc. are factors additional, which in their turn impose upon us special tasks, such as of national-liberation and agrarian revolution. Is it correct then to say that in all stages i.e. general anti-imperialist, agrarian-democratic, and socialist, his vacillations will be either of the same type or that he is to be characterised a vacillating ally? It is definitely incorrect.

The polit bureau has come to this anomalous and erroneous stand on the middle peasant, because of the following reasons:

Firstly, it has taken up the position that the present stage of our revolution is a revolution against the entire capital, including the rich peasant.

Secondly, It has bothered least to understand the imperialist stranglehold, and the necessity of fight against it. Similarly, by its pseudo-class analysis that capitalist relations have become dominant and feudal relations subsidiary, it has watered down the character of the revolution which is basically agrarian-democratic.

Lastly, while defining the role of the middle peasant, it throws out formulations such as "initially his vacillations will be very big; incited by the rich peasant he may be hostile"; "his vacillations are however bound to be great" "and the middle peasant vacillates most" etc.

Once it begins to define its role in the present stage this way, it is meaningless to state that there is an "important place for him" in the democratic front, etc. The assertion becomes more formal than real.

It is exactly this position that strengthens the hands of those comrades who have advanced the slogan of neutralising the middle peasant in the present stage. Once the polit bureau characterised him as a vacillating ally, these comrades say, it is in substance conceding their position of neutralisation, and put the question: Is it not a fact that the Bolsheviks in their strategy for October Revolution have only set task of neutralising the middle peasant and yet were able to win him over to the side of the revolution? If so, why should

we also not set ourselves the slogan of neutralising this violent vacillator in our strategy? The polit bureau cannot have any answer to this—except accept it.

Thus the enunciation of the polit bureau as regards the role of the middle peasant rather strengthens the deviation that the stage of the revolution is similar to the October Revolution, and fails to drive home the actual role of the middle peasant and its importance in the people's democratic revolution.'

Under the caption "Middle Peasant, Not a 'Firm' Ally", the polit bureau attacks the Andhra secretariat, alleging that it had made the formulation "middle peasant is a firm ally in the revolution".

Not to give any room for doubt, let us quote from the *Draft Note* of the Andhra secretariat all the formulations made in this connection.

The following formulations are in fact quotations from Mao.

"Our line is to rely on poor peasants and solidly unite with the middle peasants (not as some of our comrades say 'neutralise' them) to destroy the feudal and semi-feudal exploitation system of the landlord class and the old type of rich peasants".

"All these are concrete policies that must be adopted by our party in carrying out the strategic task of solid uniting middle peasants".

"Secondly, it is necessary to resolutely unite middle peasants and not injure the basic principles and the task of our agrarian reform will surely triumphantly be completed".

And it is only at one place does the Andhra secretariat make its independent formulation thus:

"(3) The middle peasant in this new democratic revolution is to be our ally. And it is our task to solidly unite with the middle peasant. It is wrong to think of neutralising him as in the stage of socialist revolution.

Thus it is clear that nowhere the Andhra secretariat had formulated exactly in the terms quoted by the polit bureau. The term "firm ally" is supposed to imply that the Andhra secretariat is guilty of equating the revolutionary role of the middle peasant with that of the poor peasant and agricultural labourer. In fact no such guilt exists. All the quotations cited above are only emphasising the necessity and determination of the proletariat and its party to bring the middle peasant onto the side of the revolution.

The polit bureau by attacking this position, in the way it has, has reduced the role of the middle peasant to the position of a vacillating ally, i.e. the position assigned by the polit bureau to the middle bourgeoisie after the editorial of *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy* has appeared and the consequent correction.

If such are the facts, and in the face of these, if the polit bureau still continues to think that it has correctly defined the rôle of the middle peasant, is it not self-deception?

Last but not least, the manner in which the documents of the polit bureau have placed the role of agricultural labour is itself thoroughly wrong and leading only to utter disruption of the forces of agrarian revolution.

The *Draft Note* of the Andhra secretariat had pointed out the following:

"Regarding the demands of agricultural labour, the secretariat is of the opinion, that it is wrong to import mechanically relations between a capitalist and an industrial worker into the village life where small peasant economy is dominant. It only disrupts the new democratic front, also does not get the demands of the agricultural labourers satisfied, because this mechanical outlook will drive the poor and the middle peasant into the fold of the rich peasant".

The document of the polit bureau on *Tactical Line* went hammer and tongs against these formulations and dubbed them "openly letting down the agricultural workers". The document of the polit bureau '*On the Agrarian Question*' put the demands of agricultural labour (living wage, limitation of hours of work, social insurance, and so on and so forth) on exactly the same par as the industrial working class. Comrades in some provinces, following this, brought forward as slogans for agricultural workers' strikes, the demand of Rs 80 living wage, Rs.55 dearness allowance, 8-hour day; etc. (the basic demands put forward by the AITUC).

From this whole thing followed two consequences.

Firstly, this absurd and mechanical importation into village life of the relations between a capitalist and an industrial worker—wherever it was done on the lines the documents of the polit bureau demanded—signally failed in getting the real demands of the agricultural labourers satisfied and only disrupted the new democratic front in the countryside exactly as the *Draft Note* of the Andhra secretariat had warned.

Secondly, the mechanical equating by the polit bureau of the Indian agricultural workers with the agricultural workers of the advanced capitalist countries; the failure to point out the special character of the agricultural workers in a colonial country like India, namely, the fact that they are crushed down above all by all sorts of feudal exploitation and only the agrarian revolution can ameliorate their condition by abolishing all feudal remnants and giving them land; all this meant that the key role of agricultural labour in the agrarian revolution, in the struggle for abolition of landlordism and for land to the tiller, was totally underplayed; and instead the agricultural labourers' fight was mainly confined to only demands like wage, etc.

Thus, to sum up, all the slogans of the polit bureau on the agrarian front—characterisation of rich peasant as the main spearhead of reaction and of middle peasant as the “vacillating ally”, the slogan of “nationalisation of land”, the mechanical equating of the agricultural labour to the industrial working class etc.—form one complete left-sectarian disruptive system. Wherever comrades in the provinces applied these slogans faithfully, it only led to complete disruption of the forces of agrarian revolution—isolation of agricultural labour, scaring the poor and middle peasant into the arms of the rich peasant, strengthening the hands of the landlord and so on.

The enormity of the mistakes of the polit bureau on the agrarian front can be fully realised only when one takes into account the fact that the agrarian revolution is the axis of the colonial revolution.

No doubt strong remnants of our earlier period of deeprooted reformism on the kisan front were continuing to persist inside the party after the second congress. These of course had to be fought out and corrected. But instead of doing this—and in the name of doing this—what the polit bureau did was to derail the whole discussion and present a thoroughly disruptive left-sectarian thesis.

But in its latest document (“Polit Bureau Document for all Party Members”, No. 14, dated 2 March 1950), all this self-critical analysis is missing, but it goes on in the strain that it has combated reformism correctly, and only just erred by not emphasising the anti-feudal

character of the revolution and a small mistake of wrongly lumping together the rich peasants with the landlords!

Is it not clear that the Communist Party of India if it were to chalk out a correct strategy can do so not by a simple correction here and a little amendment there in the document of the polit bureau, *On the Agrarian Question*, but only by completely rejecting it and drafting a new agrarian resolution?

## **V. Chinese Path And Forms Of Struggle**

Let us first recall what the Andhra secretariat has said in its *Draft Note* in this connection.

“(1) The offensive launched by Nehru government against the Communist Party of India is a part of the international offensive started by world imperialism. It is an offensive by which it ranges itself against all progressive and democratic forces of the world. To put it bluntly, this offensive is nothing but a cruel civil war let loose by the imperialist-bourgeois-feudal combine against the working class, peasants and other toiling masses. The stage has come wherein every day-to-day partial struggle has to be fought armed and semi-armed. Armed resistance has been forced on to the agenda of revolution by this offensive. Either we resist inch by inch the civil war and offensive let loose against us by all means at disposal of the people or allow the bourgeoisie a free hand to crush the forces of revolution and end in the victory of counter-revolutions.

“(2) Keeping all this in view, in areas where we are a good proportion in the masses like certain parts of Andhra, Kerala, Bengal, etc., the time has come to think in terms of guerilla warfare (Chinese way) against military onslaughts of Nehru government which is bent on mercilessly liquidating us. Unless with a clear perspective we plan out methods of resistance, and if we leave it to spontaneity, future history will charge us with gross betrayal of the revolution.

“(3) The liberation struggle in the form of Telangana is almost a pointer in the possible direction of forming two governments, which in the process must lead to general uprising and capture of power by the people. There are many more territories such as Telangana with a similar social-political-economic and terrain conditions spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. They can and must



be utilised as guerilla districts to begin with, which afford ample scope to develop them as liberation bases. For example, in Andhra alone areas like Rayalaseema, Telangana border areas like Munagala, Nuzvid, Chintalapudi and the agency belt, where agriculture is primitive and undeveloped, where landlordism is dominant, with poor peasant and wage labour forming overwhelming majority of population, where already there is sufficient stir in the direction of agrarian revolt, present before us huge reserves of revolutionary possibilities. Backward communication system, topographic and terrain conditions are exceptionally suited for prolonged guerilla battles (Chinese way) which lead to establishment of liberation bases. It is with such a perspective we have to successfully plan out the future course of the revolution. Not to have such a clear perspective and allowing ourselves to drift into spontaneity is a crime against revolution. "The era of contempt for perspective must end along with era of reformism" and a clearcut reorientation and well-defined strategy must open along with the revolutionary perspective. The Chinese liberation struggle offers us a living example from which we have to adopt many invaluable lessons" (the words 'resistance bases' which occur in the *Draft* have been subsequently corrected into 'liberation bases' —Andhra secretariat).

"(4) Our revolution in many respects differs from the classical Russian revolution; but is to a great extent similar to the Chinese revolution. The perspective is likely not that of general strike and armed uprising, leading to the liberation of the rural side; but the dogged resistance and prolonged civil war in the form of agrarian revolution culminating in the capture of political power by the democratic front in the process of a bitter struggle for the new democracy.

"(5) The stage has come wherein even day-to-day struggle of the toilers has to be contemplated and planned in the form of armed or partially armed resistance (Chinese way) .

"This is the perspective opened before us.

"Either we understand the perspective clearly and plan out our work in future or we drift into spontaneity and all sorts of deviations and disruption. The revolutionary history and its rich lessons

demonstrate before us the path we have to choose. The path is that of Chinese liberation struggle under the leadership of Comrade Mao Tse-tung, the practical, political and theoretical leader of the mighty colonial and semi-colonial revolution”.

In a nutshell, what are the main conclusions that emerge from all that is quoted above ?

First, the offensive started by the imperialist-bourgeois-feudal combine against working class, peasants, toiling masses, is nothing but unleashing a civil war. That is, we are decidedly drawn into a civil war.

Second, the civil war must be fought out by the revolutionary forces with armed resistance and guerilla warfare, besides other forms of struggle. That is, the question of armed resistance is forced on the agenda.

Third, the course of our struggle is and will be basically on the lines of the Chinese struggle, i.e. establishment of liberation bases through prolonged guerilla warfare, and nourish the liberation armies to completely liberate the country from the imperialist-big-business-feudal clutches.

How has the polit bureau appreciated these points?

It poohpoohed them as a call for struggle without people, as only an attempt to appear heroic, and guerilla warfare in cooperation with rich peasants. etc.

It does not stop at this. It accuses the Andhra secretariat for its alleged contrasting of the Russian and the Chinese revolution and concludes that there is nothing new to learn from the Chinese revolution besides the Russian revolution.

“Guerilla warfare against the Nehru government in cooperation with the rich peasants can you beat it?”—thus goes the jeering, heckling and ridiculing of Andhra secretariat. It may be good ridicule, but bad Marxism. Why is it the polit bureau wonders at this? Were there not in history instances of guerilla warfare, not only ‘in cooperation’ with rich peasants, but also in alliance with certain sections of the bourgeoisie. Was not the partisan warfare in Hitler-occupied Europe conducted not only in cooperation with the rich peasant but also in cooperation with sections of the bourgeoisie? Did not partisan acts during the period of 1905-07 in Russia, take

place when the rich peasant was considered still an ally of the proletariat? Is it not a fact that in the recent Chinese revolution, the guerilla warfare could be conducted with even the middle bourgeoisie in the united front? Numerous instances such as these can be cited. But our polit bureau is satisfied with ignoring all this experience and trying to make a polemical joke out of it.

Curiously enough, the polit bureau puts a big condition for the guerrilla warfare, without which it would be a crime to think of beginning guerilla warfare. That the guerilla warfare without the support of the people is unthinkable for any revolutionary is beyond dispute. But what the polit bureau states is not that. It attacks the Andhra secretariat because it has suggested that "in areas where we are in a good proportion in the masses like certain parts of Andhra, Kerala and Bengal, the time has come to think in term of guerilla warfare". Is it not an elementary truth that the revolutionary forces have to adopt different forms of struggle, including guerilla warfare, if the counter-revolutionary forms of struggle, put in force by the enemy, force upon you such? Do you abandon partisan resistance on the plea that the "overwhelming majority" of the people have not yet supported you? Is it not a fact that sometimes in history the revolutionary forces have to carry on partisan warfare even while they are still in a minority in order to nourish their armies and grow into a majority from a minority? It is correct to say that our partisan actions will be and must be in the objective interests of the majority. But it is quite another thing to put a big condition that one should start thinking in terms to guerilla warfare only when one has won over the "overwhelming majority". If this concept of the support of "overwhelming majority" is extended and applied, can one dream of partisan warfare in any province in the whole of India at the present stage? Is it not again another indisputable truth that without partisan warfare today as the main form of struggle the revolutionary forces in India would be liquidated by the Nehru government, without any revolutionary resistance worth calling? Does the polit bureau think that the revolutionary forces today can nourish their armies if confined to the forms of struggle that we have been adopting formerly in the period when both the revolution and the counter-revolution had not reached such a stage as at present?

The polit bureau counterposes the task of organising armed guerilla resistance to the task of mobilising the overwhelming majority of people. This is nothing except a failure on its part to realise the urgent and immediate particular task of the hour, while arguing about general, constant, fundamental task, i.e. mobilisation of the entire people. From where does this understanding and confusion arise? The polit bureau evidently equates the armed guerilla resistance with that of organising an insurrection. Of course it is stupid that any revolutionary party embarks upon giving a call for insurrection without the majority of the proletariat as well as the majority of the toilers are won over to the side of revolution. But can we extend this point as a precondition to guerilla resistance. i.e. a form of struggle called forth by the objective conditions of revolution? Absolutely not .

Neither has the Andhra secretariat advocated issuing a call for insurrection nor is the answer of the polit bureau to the point raised by them. It was for such 'revolutionaries' who raise the question of general fundamental tasks when faced with particular tasks that Lenin delivered a stern lecture:

"As hitherto, the basis and chief content of our work is to develop the consciousness of the masses. But let us not forget that, in addition to this general, constant and fundamental task, times like the present in Russia impose other, particular and special tasks. Let us not become pedants and philistines, let us not evade these special tasks of the moment These special tasks of the given forms of struggle, by meaningless references to our permanent duties, which remain the same in all times and circumstances " ("Lessons of the Moscow Uprising").

In this connection it would be instructive to quote from Manuilsky's speech at the seventh congress of the Comintern:

"It must not be forgotten that fascism learned from defeated tsarism how to prevent the communists from 'utilising legal possibilities', that it has surrounded its mass organisations with an espionage system of such wide ramifications as the tsarist secret police never succeeded in organising" (*From Peace Front to People's War* ).

In our case, have not the imperialists and their lackeys not only adopted them all but also stooped to measures of fascist repression even in the initial stage so as to try to destroy the growing revolution? Is it not exactly when the forces of revolution and counter-revolution are unequal, and for a time the revolutionary forces have to put up with a stronger enemy, that partisan form of struggle becomes not only necessary but also inevitable? Here is what Mao says:

“When a strong enemy launches its campaign of armed invasion and occupation against a weak nation, it is obvious that the forces and weapons of the enemy are in a favourable position while those of the invaded and oppressed nations are in an unfavourable one. But when the latter not only disdains capitulation, but attempts at self-emancipation, then guerilla war becomes a form of warfare in which inferior forces and arms are opposed to superior forces and arms” (*Aspects of Chinese Anti-Jap Struggle*).

Of course Mao had made the above statement in a slightly different set of circumstances, i.e. when Japanese imperialism had directly invaded the country and when the entire people including the ruling Kuomintang bourgeoisie took up their stand in opposition to it, etc. But the analogy holds good on the issue in discussion before us at present. In our country when the anti-imperialist revolutionary upsurge was advancing with lightning speed and gathering momentum the imperialists and the native big reactionary bourgeoisie who were mortally afraid of being swept away entered into a counter-revolutionary collaboration against the revolution. The revolutionary forces in a way are faced with a situation as to meet the offensive of the counter-revolution which for the time not only possesses superior forces and arms but other temporary advantages such as illusions about the bourgeoisie in considerable sections of the people, etc. The issue that stands clearly before the working class and its party, the Communist Party, as the vanguard of the revolution is whether to resist this counter-revolutionary offensive with suitable forms of struggle or collapse before the offensive without any resistance.

The imperialist-big-business-feudal combine with the organised strength is bent upon the liquidation of the revolutionary forces and

it is precisely in order to preserve our forces from destruction and to advance to national emancipation without capitulation, that makes it incumbent on us to take up the question of partisan warfare. Has the polit bureau taken into serious consideration all this? No.

However the polit bureau may argue that it has said in the *Tactical Line* that we use all the forms, including the guerilla warfare, corresponding to the needs of the situation. But this statement does not take us very far. Why? Once it poohpoohs the suggestion of the Andhra secretariat of guerilla warfare in areas where we are in a good proportion of people like Andhra, Kerala and Bengal in which the class enemy launched his terror rule with arms, it repudiates the fact that guerilla warfare in the circumstances of today has become the basis and main form of struggle set before the Indian revolutionary movement as a whole.

Here it would be far from complete, if we do not examine the political and ideological roots of this deviation and distorted outlook of the polit bureau so that it can be fought out in the concrete. What are they?

Firstly, the polit bureau has woefully failed to examine the question of "forms of struggle". In the background of socio-economic-political conditions prevailing in our country, when the issue of armed guerilla struggle was raised by the Andhra secretariat. Secondly, an erroneous, mechanical, anti-Marxist understanding and conception of proletarian hegemony gripped the polit bureau, as a consequence of which it landed in putschist and adventurist tactics on the working class front in cities and paralysing and liquidationist tactics on the peasant front in the countryside. Thirdly the polit bureau has failed to understand the colonial setup of our country with its historical peculiarities distinguished from that of any capitalist, independent imperialist country in its social, economic and political factors.

Now let us proceed to examine each in its full details.

Below are the two principal theoretical propositions by which a Marxist must be guided while examining the issue of "forms of struggle", as enunciated by Lenin:

*"Let us begin from the beginning. What are the fundamental*

demands which every Marxist should make of an examination of the question of the forms of struggle? In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by the fact that it does not bind the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It admits the most varied forms of struggle; and it does not 'concoct' them, but only generalises, organises, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the mass struggle in progress, which with the development of the movement, with the growth of class consciousness of the masses, with the accentuation of economic and political crises, is continually giving rise to new and more varied methods of defence and offence. Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle that are possible and that exist at the given moment only, recognising as it does that new forms of struggle unknown to the participants of the given period, inevitably arise as the given social situation changes. In this respect Marxism learns, if we may so express it, from mass practice, and makes no claim whatever to teach the masses forms of struggle invented by 'systematisers' in the seclusion of their studies. We know—said Kautsky, for instance, when examining the forms of social revolution—that the coming crisis will introduce new forms of struggle that we are now unable to foresee.

"In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely historical examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat the question apart from the concrete historical situation is to be ignorant of the very rudiments of dialectical materialism. At different stages of economic evolution, depending on differences in political and national-cultural conditions, condition of life and other conditions, different forms of struggle appear in the foreground and become the principal forms of struggle; and in connection with this, the secondary, auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in their turn. To attempt to answer yes or no to the question whether any particular means of struggle should be used, without making a detailed examination of the concrete situation of the given movement at the

given stage of its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist position" ("Partisan Warfare").

That our polit bureau has not only not guided itself on these lines but quite the contrary, can be proved; firstly, because of its insistence on, and dogged clinging to, the strategy of political general strike and countrywide armed uprising; secondly, because of its refusal to undertake a historical examination of the question, i.e. the objective economic, social, political conditions prevailing in the country.

Has the polit bureau, while ad nauseam repeating the terms "crisis", "upsurge" and "revolution" understood what they actually mean in terms of objective political evaluation? Evidently not. If it had understood, it would have characterised the period as a period of civil war; it would have examined carefully the 'retaliatory' forms of struggle the class enemy had unleashed against the revolutionary forces and their vanguard, the Communist Party, proper, practicable, suitable forms of struggle, while discarding some, as the situation demanded of it; it would also have discussed the problem in concrete and laid down before the party what form or forms of struggle have to appear more and more in the foreground as the principal or main form or forms of struggle and what are becoming the secondary and auxiliary forms of struggle. The polit bureau did nothing of the kind and only went on repeating abstract 'recipes' in a dogmatic and sectarian manner, while the reformists opportunistically began to sing their songs characterising every militant and armed resistance of the people as 'adventurism', 'anarchism' and 'terrorism', in the same typical fashion that the Nehru-Patel government and its henchmen are doing day in and day out. Here curiously enough both the right-reformists and left-sectarians who pretend to 'fight' each other had fought each other in fact from the same bourgeois nationalist point of view which has nothing to do with the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary point of view. In the final analysis both the trends logically lead to disrupting and liquidating the revolutionary struggle. Neither of them analyses the question in its historical background nor can either evolve correct forms of struggle for the fighting people. Both cheat them and betray them. The two classical examples in the recent history of the party are the Joshian reformist running away before the ruthless repression of the enemy and the



reckless adventurist forms of struggle advanced by the polit bureau under B.T.Ranadive's leadership.

Now coming to the point, the post-war mass anti-imperialist revolutionary wave had begun almost at the very close of the anti-fascist war. In spite of the fact that the big bourgeois leadership of the National Congress had attempted to sabotage, disrupt and misdirect the rising tide of the revolution, and in spite of the fact that the Communist Party failed to understand the nature and significance of it and to consciously lead it, nevertheless it was reaching huge proportions and qualitatively new heights. Of course it was also true that by the very virtue of it, the Communist Party of India placed itself at the head of the revolutionary upsurge which began to strike terror into the hearts of both imperialism and native reaction. It is on the crest of this revolutionary wave that the Congress leadership stretched its counter-revolutionary hand for collaboration with British imperialism, sealed the final betrayal which took the shape of the Mountbatten award. In a nutshell the situation was, irrespective of the sabotage of the National Congress leadership, irrespective of the lack of conscious political guidance by the political parties concerned, irrespective of the counter-revolutionary communal riots and one hundred thousand other manoeuvres of imperialists, and finally irrespective of the political vacillations and mistakes of the Communist Party of India while leading the post-war upsurge, the anti-imperialist national-emancipatory war went on extending, deepening and reaching ever new heights. This all-embracing national-liberation war assumed the characteristic of a civil war because of the fact that the big bourgeois leadership of Congress with its political following entered the scene direct as a counter-revolutionary force along with imperialism. The fact that the basic objective factors which gave rise to this post-war anti-imperialist upheaval continue today unabated, and the fact that the Communist Party and the working class along with the other toiling millions under its leadership has taken up the challenge of reaction to lead the revolution to its successful conclusion without surrender, create the conditions of a civil war, and the period in which we are living can be characterised in strictly scientific political terms only as a period of civil war. Anybody who refuses to see the truth that

the revolution has already begun, that classes and masses are in open political action and that there is actually a civil war on sees nothing and cannot claim a grain of revolutionary outlook in him. None should allow this reality of civil war to be submerged in phrases like 'crisis', 'upsurge', 'revolutionary movement', etc. so as to lose its complete and comprehensive meaning and significance, as our polit bureau has done.

Next one ought to proceed to examine the forms of struggle that the revolutionary people are using and the 'retaliatory' forms of struggle the counter-revolutionary government has unleashed against the revolution to counter and smash it. Lenin had pointed out "the general course of the Russian revolution after October, and the sequence of events in Moscow in the December days, have supplied striking proof of one of the most profound propositions of Marx: Revolution progresses by giving rise to strong and united counter-revolution, i.e. it compels the enemy to resort to more and more extreme measures of defence and in this way devises more powerful means of attack" ("The Lessons of Moscow Uprising").

The post-war revolutionary stage, besides its sweep, tempo and tenacity, has assumed new forms of struggle—higher and militant in character. From the usual, normal 'peace time' struggles such as peaceful strikes, demonstrations and agrarian struggles, i.e. they have advanced to qualitatively new heights such as political strikes, demonstrations, armed resistance, forcible seizure of grain and land from the landlords and zamindars; starting with RIN mutiny and several revolts in the army and police, the innumerable political battles fought by the militant working class throughout the country, the Telangana agrarian revolt, the Tebhaga struggle in Bengal, Punnapra-Vayalar and North Malabar struggles and hundreds of peasant revolts all over the Indian subcontinent only go to demonstrate this truth. Thus the people had begun outright smashing the decadant socio-economic fabric of this feudal ridden colonial society and creating a new order of their own, free from all imperialist oppression and medieval exploitation.

The imperialist enemy on his part is not sleeping, but devising further brutal 'retaliatory' forms of struggle, besides the usual routine repressive laws and methods. He entered into compromise with the

Congress leadership, to set up a puppet regime of reaction, of counter-revolution with an extended social base. He had managed to make the different provincial Congress legislatures, even before the final pact of Mountbatten award, enact ordinances, goonda acts, and public safety acts, etc.—all of them were deliberately and solely to be used against the rising revolutionary forces. By closing down all progressive and revolutionary press and by banning all meetings and demonstrations he had struck at all propaganda and agitation by the people's forces. By banning all the active mass and class organisations, he had made their functioning extremely difficult and even impossible. By his repressive fascist laws he had brought all strikes under unlawful actions. By indiscriminate arrests and detentions of all revolutionary workers and leaders, hurling them into the concentration camps, he had nullified every vestige of civil liberty and individual freedom of action. Every smallest agrarian struggle, every normal strike struggle of the workers and the employees and every democratic agitation and mobilisation including that of Mahila Sangh is teargassed, lathicharged and subjected to shooting. He had set up thousands of counter-revolutionary goonda gangs in the name of 'homeguards', 'Congress volunteer corps' and 'anti-communist defence committees' in every territory. Huge armed constabulary which is nothing but a semi-military force with modern weapon such as tommy-guns and machine-guns is built and constantly let loose to commit all sorts of atrocities and sadistic terror against the people. In areas like Telangana, Andhra, etc., the police and army are given powers to shoot down any person they suspect to be a communist and already hundreds of trade-union and kisan workers and leaders have been shot dead after they are arrested and captured. Virtually medieval fascist terror rule is clamped down upon the people.

Would it not be utter bankruptcy on the part of any revolutionary which would prove disastrous to the revolution if he were to stick to the 'usual', 'normal' and 'peaceful' forms of struggle against these fascist 'retaliatory' forms of struggle of the class enemy? That this would be so is proved from our own recent history.

First, let us take the methods of organisation. It was incumbent upon us to seriously set to organise the party on illegal lines in the face of growing repression. But what did we do? Even after the

December 1947 resolution of the central committee and for that matter even after the second party congress, the party leadership was living in a legalist utopia. Party committees that were elected during this period—a central committee of 31 with a polit bureau of nine, provincial committees and district committees of 21-30, with a secretariat of seven to nine etc.—were not on the basis of illegal functioning; every contact exposed, every party member including the newly-recruited put in the open list and party funds and huge properties left fully vulnerable, etc., all this was a testimony to our spontaneity and failure to change and adapt the party organisation to the new situation. The resultant damage is the living experience of every unit in the entire party.

Mass and class organisations continued working only as long as their full legal functioning was allowed by the class enemy; but once he began to strike at their leading committee and personnel they were almost paralysed. With total banning of them in many provinces the mass and class organisations went out of existence for all practical purposes except in name. Nonrealisation of the immense necessity of illegal organisation and functioning of the trade unions, kisan sabhas, etc. led to practical liquidation of them before the brutal onslaught of the enemy. The attempt to push through along the old, usual, normal methods landed us in the present state of paralysation.

It is clear from the above that whereas in the former days our main form of conducting party and mass organisations was legal, the present conditions impose upon us the illegal party and mass organisations as the main form. Either one has to adapt to it or get liquidated.

In the same way whereas in earlier times, we had the legal press as the main form for agit-prop in today's circumstances it can only be illegal press as the main form of agit-prop.

In the former days, economic and political strikes, demonstrations and meetings, etc. were useful forms of struggle, to mobilise the people, to fight for the demands, to school and temper the working class and toiling millions, to nourish the revolutionary forces for the final assault on the class enemy. But to repeat them in the same manner under the conditions of white terror of the enemy would not

only lead to a failure to achieve the abovementioned objectives but end in annihilation of the cadre, disruption and liquidation of the revolutionary movement. Even in cases where conditions permit and demand such forms of struggle, one must be prepared to meet the armed offensive of the enemy with armed resistance and so train the participants as to deliver a swift attack and effect a timely retreat without draining the last drop of blood and ending in total smashup of the fighting vanguard.

The refusal to change the forms of struggle and adapt suitable new forms of struggle has led the polit bureau into adventurist actions in the trade-union front, and jails, etc., along with "bold strike calls" which either did not materialise at all or only partially materialised., with smashing blows from the enemy and the incalculable losses. No serious revolutionary party would issue calls of general strike fixing the date months ahead of the event, if it were to take into consideration the fascist terror rule that is ranging in the country. Such calls served only as signals for the class enemy to attack the fighting people, even before their mobilisation and organisation for the strike struggle had hardly begun. Many a general strike call goes to corroborate the same and nothing else. To characterise them as mere left-sectarianism is not enough; it is crude infantilism. Yet what our polit bureau had followed was this and this alone.

In the name of revolutionary situation and the necessity of adopting militant forms of struggle, including armed resistance, what did the polit bureau give ? It advocated mass frontal clashes with the police and military. It is precisely against such tactics and forms of struggle that Lenin warns : "It would be folly to contend against artillery in crowds and defend barricades with revolvers", and advocates new tactics : "These tactics are the tactics of guerilla warfare. The organisation required for such tactics is that of mobile and exceedingly small units, units of ten, three or even two persons." The polit bureau has neither cared to learn from the above teachings of Lenin nor bothered to draw lessons from the big struggles such as Punnappra-Vayalar, North Malabar and similar other struggles. These struggles suffered devastating defeats, mainly because of the erroneous forms of struggle adopted, i.e. tactics of contending against artillery in crowds.

What did our polit bureau say when armed guerilla resistance against the armed offensive of the government was suggested by the Andhra secretariat? It vehemently attacked the proposal from two angles. Firstly, it straightaway asserted that armed guerilla resistance can be undertaken only after the majority of the people are won over! What did this imply? It clearly implied that without building a "united front" in advance, no armed guerilla resistance can be contemplated. Has this counterposing anything to do with Marxist-Leninist approach to the problem? Nothing whatsoever. Armed guerilla warfare is a form of struggle which no revolutionary desires to impose upon the revolution according to his own subjective desires and fancies. It is called forth by objective political conditions, conditions which not in a small degree are imposed upon the revolution by the class enemy and his methods of 'retaliation', i.e. counter-revolutionary terror, etc. It is stupid to think the class enemy lets loose his fascist white terror only after the Communist Party has won the majority of the people politically! Can a revolutionary evade the question of meeting the enemy's terror with counterterror, with proper form of struggle, except at his peril? But our polit bureau asks the party and the fighting people not to resort to armed guerilla resistance until they have won the majority of the people to their side. This stand reduces itself to either mass armed resistance and mass frontal attacks against the enemy's military and police or no resistance at all but only go on doing propaganda to build democratic front while on one hand the united revolutionary movement that is built is being liquidated! This is nothing but crude subjectivism which works out forms of struggle from inside its own head, so to speak, which detaches the question from the concrete reality of civil war the enemy had let loose against the revolutionary people.

Are we to sit with folded hands, if the class enemy attacks us, until we have already become an overwhelming majority? None except the opportunist coward can propose this. Here is a passage from Lenin to teach us on the issue. While 'intellectuals' like Plekhanov, etc., were condemning the armed actions of the workers during the revolution in 1905, Lenin chastised them thus: "Marx regarded world history from the standpoint of those who make it without being in a position to calculate the chances infallibly beforehand, and not from the standpoint

of an intellectual philistine who moralises: 'It was easy to foresee ...they should not have taken to...'

"Marx was also able to appreciate that there are moments in history when the desperate struggle of the masses even for a hopeless cause is essential for the further schooling of these masses and their training for the next struggle.

"Such a statement of the question is quite incomprehensible and even alien in principle to our presentday quasi-Marxists, who love to take the name of Marx in vain, to borrow only his estimate of the past, and not his ability to make the future. Plekhanov did not even think of it when he set out after December 1905 'to put the brakes on'.

"But it is precisely this question that Marx raises, without in the least forgetting that he himself in September 1870 regarded insurrection as a desperate folly.

"...The bourgeois canaille of Versailles', he writes ... 'presented the Parisians with the alternative of taking up the fight or succumbing without a struggle. In the latter case the demoralisation of the working class would have been a far greater misfortune than the fall of any number of leaders" ("Preface to Karl Marx's Letters to Kugelmann").

When the bourgeois curs of France had attacked the working class of France when conditions to organise and insurrection were not yet mature, Marx, who had warned the working class earlier against any premature uprising, came forth with a decisive lead to the revolutionary people. In our case had we organised an insurrection as such against the collaborationist regime? Except the Nehru-Patel government and its servitors nobody dares to utter such a lie. The fear of growing revolution made the government resort to fascist white terror, with a view to wipe out the vanguard of the revolution before it gains the upperhand. The only alternative placed before us under such conditions is either to accept the challenge and fight it back with suitable forms of struggle or succumb before the enemy without a struggle. A revolutionary can only accept the former and never the latter.

Of course one point needs to be clarified here. The passages quoted above emphasise the standpoint of the revolutionary, even in the unfavourable circumstances described therein. But in our case neither is our struggle 'desperate' nor is our case 'hopeless', for

that matter the alternatives before are not merely either to accept a defeat after a fight or succumb without a fight. Why? On a world scale a decisive shift is there in favour of our camp, i.e. the camp of democracy and socialism. Secondly, we are living in a period of daily accentuated and deepened capitalist crisis which unleashes powerful forces of struggle. Thirdly, we are living and working in a country which is a granite mine of immense revolutionary potentialities i.e. tremendous agrarian-revolutionary and the national-liberationist forces under the leadership of the working class and the Communist Party. Lastly, for more than four years in the post-war period our people have been fighting death-defying battles, and are already in the thick of liberation struggle.

It is no more a question before us whether we like to be dragged into a civil war or not. Irresistible logic of life has already dragged us into it, we are deep in it. Now the question is to adopt proper and suitable forms of struggle to victoriously come out of it. Those that resist this and refuse to adopt armed partisan warfare in the name of political general strike and countrywide armed uprising and those that denounce partisan warfare calling it adventurism, anarchism and terrorism on the pretext that there is no 'revolutionary situation', represent nothing but two extreme poles of bourgeois-nationalist outlook from two ends, i.e. left-sectarian and right-reformist.

Here we would like to put a straight question to the polit bureau. Are you prepared to take up the position: either the Communist Party organises the political general strike and a countrywide armed uprising, i.e. classical strategy of insurrection or there is no other way and no other form of struggle to overthrow the enemy and capture power? Now the class enemy had already seized the initiative from us and created and is further creating conditions where we cannot organise such an insurrection, this is a clear truth. If you take the stand that the "classical insurrectionary" form of struggle is the exclusive form of struggle for capture of power then what is your way out of the situation as we are facing at present in our country? You cannot show any alternative fighting line except to unservedly accept the "Chinese path" i.e. the path of armed partisan warfare, coupled with the agrarian revolution to create liberation bases and liberation armies, while building a people's democratic



front to defeat the enemy and establish people's democracy. Is it not anti-Marxist to cling to set forms of struggle, and make a fetish of them irrespective of any and every objective condition of the revolution? It is so and is in urgent need of rejection and refutation.

Why does the polit bureau cling to this anti-Marxist stand? As we have already pointed out above this deviation arises from an erroneous, mechanical and undialectical understanding of the concept of the proletarian hegemony. Here we do not propose to go into the question of discussing what is meant by proletarian hegemony in the national-liberation struggle. The issue under discussion is about the ways and means of establishing that hegemony. What does the polit bureau say: "It is thus clear that hegemony cannot mean hegemony of the party without the working class being the action, but directly the hegemony of the working class led by the party, the entire working class in action." Leaving aside the ingenious interpretations and twists of the abovequoted passage, in plain and simple language it is: The working class can establish in hegemony only through a political general strike and armed uprising; the working class cannot secure hegemony through the Communist Party and the hegemony of the party is not to be considered as working class hegemony. No other forms of action by the working class except the political general strike and armed rising is considered as 'action' worth calling so. This is the position of the polit bureau on this question in a nutshell.

Is it permissible for any Marxist to draw such a vulgar distinction and differentiation between the hegemony of the working class and the hegemony of the Communist Party? Is it not creating a Chinese wall and a big gulf between the class and the party?

Thus the party is not only the vanguard, the organised detachment and the general staff of the working class but "a part of the class, closely bound up with it by all the fibres of its being". Is it not atrocious to depict an "unbridgeable gulf" between the party and the class? It is definitely so.

If one were to point out that our party as it stands today is lacking in the genuine characteristic of a Bolshevik party i.e. its weak ideological and theoretical grounding, its defective class composition, etc., it does not thereby question the basic premises

discussed above. It only draws our attention to the fact that great many tasks face the party today, to build it as a real revolutionary party on the lines of Lenin-Stalin Bolshevik Party.

Now coming to the question of proletarian hegemony, as deduced by the polit bureau from the abovestated erroneous outlook, is it correct to counterpose the hegemony of the party to the hegemony of the working class?

It is by the party that the hegemony of the proletariat has to be prepared and achieved. The concept "proletarian hegemony" is inconceivable without the party; the hegemony of the party cannot but be the hegemony of the working class. At the same time, the question arises about the actual and practical actions of the working class as a class by itself besides the role of its party, the vanguard and the organised detachment of the class. It would be erroneous if one were to foolishly deduce, from the severe criticism we have levelled against the polit bureau on this point, that the working class as a class can be left to inaction, while its party only leads the armed struggle in the countryside. Nothing more vulgar and further from the truth exists than such an understanding.

The working class must organise itself by uniting the entire class. It must adopt suitable forms of struggle, and accumulate its strength while secretly lending every conceivable support to the armed struggle in the countryside. It will send its activists, whose safety in the working class centres is in serious jeopardy, to join the armed guerilla bands. Because of its strategical position, i.e. directly linked with production of various goods including the war material, its key position in the transport services and its existence in the heart of the *enemy-controlled cities and centres etc. it will be in a favourable position to assist the armed warfare starting from sabotage of war production to supplying information about the enemy in innumerable ways. Where conditions of white terror have not yet reached extreme proportions, and the overwhelming part of the class in unity can organise the strike struggle it will unhesitatingly utilise those opportunities too. From facts and figures which have appeared in the bourgeois press itself, which we know are far from complete* ~~the most such~~ news we see that during the three months, ~~December~~ December 1949 alone, no less than hundred

and fifteen strikes took place in different industries. From this alone we are able to see what possibilities still exist for conducting strike actions of the working class provided correct tactics are adopted. Here, of course, it would be out of place to go into too many details of it. The point to be cleared is that without the working class being solidly organised and united under the leadership of the Communist party, the final victory in the liberation struggle is unthinkable. The actions and organisation of Chinese working class during the period of the twenty years under white terror and its role in the final liberation of cities is a living example before us. It could establish its hegemony over the national-liberation struggle through the Communist Party, without a political general strike and armed uprising as the exclusive method as our polit bureau holds to be.

Lastly, our polit bureau clean forgets that our country is a colonial country as distinct from developed capitalist country. This factor has a number of consequences which can be forgotten only by political bankrupts. Besides its bearing on the class strategy, this has its influence on the fighting strategy of the proletariat. Firstly, the agrarian revolution as the axis of the colonial revolution has its distinguishing feature from that of an advanced capitalist country. The world capitalist crisis first and foremost bursts forth as an agrarian crisis in the colony, the agrarian appendage of imperialist economy. Overwhelming majority of the people—more than 90 per cent—live in the countryside, closely bound with and largely dependent upon agrarian economy. The peasantry is the main ally of the proletariat and the chief force in the agrarian-democratic revolution. The small numerical strength of the proletariat concentrated in the cities while on the one hand affording scope and possibility for the imperialists and their native lackeys to keep it under their military grip and occupation, on the other also provides the fighting proletariat and its party the scope to fall back on the vast countryside, which does not entirely depend for the existence on cities and where the modern communications to facilitate the enemy's military movements are far less developed and where liberation bases can be established and liberation armies can be nourished through prolonged armed resistance linked with the agrarian revolution. The

polit bureau exactly by ignoring this colonial feature failed to assess the advantages and disadvantages objectively placed before the fighting proletariat and the people and landed in all mechanical, dogmatic and sectarian forms of struggle and fighting strategy.

However to understand this path, correctly described as the "Chinese path", as a smooth, happy, cement-road-like path spells bankruptcy for a revolutionary. This is a hard and difficult path which calls froth from the revolutionary forces immense sacrifices, undying heroism, dogged tenacity, superhuman organisational abilities and abounding faith in the cause of people's democracy and socialism. But there is no other easier path for success in the struggle for national liberation and people's democracy in the condition present today. Sectarian rejection or reformist opportunist interpretation of this 'path' only leads to disaster and liquidation of the revolution. That is how matter stands.

Thus it once and for all bars all door for opportunist distortion of the political line, which by seizing a phrase here and word there attempts to nullify it. The earlier formulations in Liu Shao-chi's speech and the editorial of *For a lasting peace, for a people's Democracy* of 27 January 1950, such as "this path should be taken by the people of many colonial and dependent countries and the formation of liberation armies 'whenever necessary' internal conditions allow it", etc., were seized upon by both the trends of left and right deviationists for their own purposes. But their ingenious arguments that the term "many colonial" countries does not imply our country also and that the clause "whenever internal conditions permit" indicates that the present internal conditions of India do not permit such a course, etc., are now proved to be nothing but a hoax and a fraud.

The failure of the polit bureau to understand the present stage of the Indian revolution and how it has risen to new qualitative heights can only be explained in one way. Its understanding of world capitalist crisis and revolutionary upsurge is only formal and skin deep. Or else, how can it dare to characterise the timely and valuable suggestion of Andhra secretariat as "only an attempt to appear heroic" and as "a dressing for reformism"?

As a matter of fact, if this experience of the Andhra secretariat—the experience of Telangana—had been transmitted to other provinces the situation in our country today would have been totally different. Take for example Kerala. Why is it that there has set in a stagnation in the movement and its advance during this period in Kerala? Do we not all know that the Kerala movement, by the time of the second congress, was a movement more advanced in certain respects than that of Andhra? Its state people's movement which enacted the mighty struggles of Vayalar and Punnappa, is older than that of Telangana. Its strong base (stronger than in any other province) among the poor peasantry and the working class, its mass Communist Party membership of 15,000 steeled in many a battle, though of course fettered by our old reformist policies facts of common knowledge to us all. The present stagnation and the deadlock in provincial committee secretariat is to be primarily accounted for by the failure of the polit bureau in guiding it with proper forms of struggle. If only the Telangana experience were grasped by the polit bureau and proper lessons drawn and given to Kerala, that province today would have been another challenging base of guerillas against the collaborationist government. Kerala would have been neither paralysed as it is now, nor Telangana guerrilla base would have been left more or less isolated as is the case now. This is not the proper place to make a full detailed assessment of the damage caused to the revolutionary movement in India by the situation. We will deal with it separately.

Again the Andhra secretariat has pointed out that the Chinese revolution has had to traverse a different path from that of the Russian revolution, characterising the former as extending from the rural side to the cities and the latter from the cities to the rural side. Without going into exhaustive discussion on this subject here, i.e. what historical conditions have been responsible for deciding the respective courses, etc. one must take note of the peculiarities characterising each.

How does the polit bureau react to this? After delivering a long lecture, it sums up its position thus: "Why had the Chinese to go through the protracted civil war? Just because the leadership of the Chinese Communist party, at times failed to fight for the hegemony of the proletariat, for bringing the majority of the masses in alliance

and under the leadership of the proletariat,. Because it followed tactical policies which led to a disaster" (*Tactical Line*)

And in support of this contention it goes on to give passage after passage from the colonial theses of the Communist International, where the mistakes of the Chinese Communist Party are detailed.

This explanation by the polit bureau of the protracted Chinese civil war is indeed staggering. The leadership of the Communist Party of India has miserably failed not only in the past to learn from the mistakes of the Chinese Communist Party, as was specifically instructed by the Communist International, but also now it refuses to learn from the rich experiences of the Chinese revolutionary struggle.

How did the Communist International instruct us?

"Living, concrete, historical dialectics, such as were demonstrated by the now completed first period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in China, will give to the communists, especially those working in the colonial countries, a valuable experience which it is necessary to study diligently in order to draw the correct conclusions, especially from the mistakes committed in the course of communist work in the colonies" (*Colonial Theses of the Communist International*).

What are the mistakes committed by the Chinese Communist Party? As pointed out by the Communist International, they are, in a nutshell: the Communist Party's failure to develop the agrarian movement, its failure in developing independent actions of the revolutionary masses, its failure to struggle for its hegemony and tailing sometimes behind the Kuomintang bourgeoisie and sometimes behind the Wuhan wing of the Chinese petty-bourgeoisie.

Has the Communist Party of India "studied diligently" and learnt from these mistakes? If so, how are we to explain the entire reformism that has been practised by us and which landed us finally in support of the collaborationist Nehru government till the second party congress? We ignobly failed, this is a fact. Now the line chosen by the polit bureau to explain the Chinese path undoubtedly has led and will led to refusal to learn from the rich experience of the Chinese path, the path they have carved out at the cost of inhuman suffering, enormous sacrifice in life, blood and tears. To explain away the entire Chinese path by means of the mistakes the Chinese Communist

Party has committed is scandalous and vulgarisation to the extreme.

When we see this we are reminded of Stalin's remarkable, enunciation, while answering the slanderous attack by the "left opposition" on the Communist International.

Of course there is one difference. Our polit bureau tries to explain the causes for the protracted nature of the Chinese civil war, whereas the opposition in the communist International whom Stalin was addressing had attempted to explain the defeat of the Chinese revolution by the supposed wrong tactics of the Communist International given to the Chinese Communist Party to put it sharply, the positions taken by both, our polit bureau and the "left-opposition in the Communist International will be thus:

Because of the wrong tactics given by the Communist International to the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese revolution was defeated—says the "left"-opposition.

Because the Chinese Communist Party has committed a number of tactical mistakes leading to failure to establish proletarian hegemony, the revolution was defeated at the time, and this in turn led to protracted civil war—says the polit bureau.

Is there any real difference between both the analyses? Apparently it may look to be. But, actually, they both start from the same premise *and both of them analyse the causes for the defeat in the same manner.* According to one, but for the tactical mistakes of the Communist International, the Chinese revolution would have been a success. According to other, but for the tactical mistakes of the Chinese communist Party, the Chinese civil war would not have been protracted, i.e. the revolution would have succeeded then and there alone. Here the malady is, as Stalin says, to forget the decisive factors, i.e. *the existing concrete correlation of class forces.*

Thus the Chinese path is a path which has become historically inevitable and not, as some try to explain away, the result of a failure here and a tactical mistake there.

*One must pause here and ask: Does the polit bureau's analysis go to educate or miseducate the party ranks?*

It is precisely because the polit bureau has failed to understand the whole set of class relations that have led to the Chinese path, it has refused to appreciate the new in it and apply it in concrete to the revolutionary struggle in India, that it has pitched its tent on, and

refused to budge from, the slogans of general strike and countryside armed uprising. For communists it is neither permissible to cling only to the set forms nor make any unconditional repudiation of any of them.

In the words of Lenin:

“Right-doctrinairism persisted in recognising only the old forms, and became totally bankrupt, for it did not perceive the new content. Left-doctrinairism persists in unconditional repudiation of certain old forms and fails to see that the new content is forcing its way through all and sundry forms, that it is our duty as communists to master all forms, to learn how, with maximum rapidity, to supplement one form with another, to substitute one for another, and to adapt our tactics to every such change not called forth by our class or by our efforts” (*“Left-Wing” Communism*).

Thus it becomes necessary that the communists should assess the complete objective conditions in deciding which form of struggle in which situation becomes either dominant (i.e. the main form), or subsidiary, or out of place, etc. Otherwise it would be undialectical pedantry and not Marxism.

Our polit bureau, in its document *Tactical Line*, had gone whole hog in attacking the very conception of the Chinese path, and summarily dismissed it as nothing new. But the editorial of *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy* 27 January 1950 points out thus:

“Analysing the conditions of the victory of the Chinese people's liberation revolution, Liu Shao-chi, vice-president of the world Federation of Trade Unions, in his speech to the Peking trade-union conference of the countries of Asia and Oceania, stated: “The path taken by the Chinese people... is the path that should be taken by the people of many colonial and dependent countries in their struggle for national independence and people's democracy.”

The polit bureau not only sat unconcerned and unworried for months after the speech of Liu Shao-chi had appeared in the organ of the Cominform bureau but, even after the editorial in the organ had pointed out as above, it has not a word of self-criticism to say in its latest document on this subject! Enough harm has already been done. It is imperative that the central committee considers this question afresh?



## **The National Question**

In the period of reformism, the party pursued the grossly servile policy of tailism to the bourgeoisie all along the line. The manifestations of this on the national question were particularly disastrous. In the name of "self-determination", we tailed being the communal chauvinism and separatism of the Muslim League leaders and supported their reactionary disruptive slogans at every stage. Thereby we brought grist to the mill of the imperialist policy of divide and rule and its culmination in the religious-communal partition of India. Not only this, we extended our support to the reactionary communalism of the Scheduled Castes Federation leadership and also came out with the pernicious slogans of "separate electorates", "separate settlements", etc. for the untouchable—also in the name of 'self-determination'!

It is well known what havoc our policy in this period on the national question caused.

The second party congress generally corrected these mistakes of ours and called for correct application of the slogan of self-determination of nationalities.

But instead of doing this, the polit bureau since the second party congress has gradually advanced the left-sectarian slogan of "self-determination of toilers" as against the self-determination of nationalities. It did this in the name of "fighting reformism and bourgeois nationalism" and in the name of "proletarian internationalism". In pursuance of this left-sectarian line, the polit bureau in effect opposed all national movements, movements for linguistic-cultural provinces and dissolution of feudal states (as in *Hyderabad*) and by advocating in all cases (as in the cases of *Kashmir*) joining the Indian Union by itself as their demand of the Communist Party. This policy in effect meant nothing else but subservience to big bourgeois chauvinism, lending support to the policy of national oppression pursued at the dictates of imperialism by the Nehru-Patel government representing the interests of the dominant Gujrati-Marwari big bourgeoisie.

Here we are not going into all details of a complete picture of the national question, but only into those aspects that are necessary to bring out sharply the worst mistakes committed by the polit bureau in this period.

India is a multinational country. British imperialism retarded the growth of the nations and national entities by pursuing a policy of divide and rule in order to suppress the peoples of all nationalities that had either grown up or were growing. It created artificial administrative divisions based upon splitting up the nationalities and propped up feudal princedom in the native states for the suppression of the people (many of these princely states themselves being composed of various nationalities being split up and divided) like Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin. It created excluded and partially-excluded areas to suppress the tribal peoples and to stifle their growth into fullfledged nations. It fanned and provoked communal conflict and riots culminating in the infamous partition under the Mountbatten award.

The same policy is being carried forward by the Indian big bourgeoisie installed into power by British imperialism as its junior partner. Not satisfied with virtually reducing the status and powers of the provinces under the new constitution to that of a district board or municipality, it has refused the demand for linguistic provinces even under such a setup. It has stifled the growth of all nationalities by saving and supporting feudal princedom in the states and by refusing the demand for dissolution of the states (like Hyderabad, Travancore-Cochin, Mysore, etc.) and their component parts being rejoined to the respective linguistic areas, etc. It continues the oppression of the tribal and semi-tribal people by refusing to grant them autonomous regions.

The demand for autonomous linguistic provinces and for the dissolution of the state merging their component parts in the respective linguistic areas (Vishal Andhra, Samyukta Karnataka, Samyukta Maharashtra, United Kerala, etc.) is a progressive democratic anti-imperialist demand. It is a demand directed against the imperialist feudal-bigbourgeois combine.

The chauvinistic reactionary elements of various nationalities in India are trying to utilise these national movements to serve their own reactionary purposes. As against this, it is task of the Communist Party to seize the initiative and lead these movements as part of the general struggle for national independence and people's democracy. This is how proletarian hegemony in the national question is exercised.

As against this, what does the polit bureau's policy amount to?

The crassest instance of it can be seen in the slogans it gave regarding the demand for dissolution of Hyderabad state and rejoining its component national parts to the respective linguistic areas.

Let us examine the arguments of the polit bureau.

According to the polit bureau, firstly, it is "nothing but a paraphrase of the bourgeois version of bringing the state administration to the level of provincial administration". Elsewhere, in the same document, it is characterised as a "mere paraphrase of Sardar Patel's slogan of bringing the state to the administrative level of provinces".

Such an argument is nothing but the most shamefaced attempt to screen the arch reactionary policy of the Nehru-Patel government with regard to the Nizam and the feudal order in Hyderabad state represented by him. It is another face of the same old bankrupt discredited thesis of the polit bureau that the bourgeoisie is "compelling" feudalism in the state to "reform to its advantage" and so on.

What is the reality? The Nehru-Patel government has rejected the demand for liquidation of the Nizam's order and the disintegration of Hyderabad state. It is consolidating the Nizam's rule and the rotten feudal order in the state and continuing the policy of national oppression of the different nationalities in the state. It is trying to throw dust into the eyes of the people over this oppressive policy by talking of "free election", a "consembly" for the state and so on. And here comes our polit bureau—virtually defending this policy from another end, from the 'revolutionary' end and saying that in so far as "immediate practical action" is concerned, the big bourgeoisie is already doing what is wanted by those who demand the disintegration of the state and rejoining of the different linguistic areas of the state to the respective provinces; that it is already "raising the state administration to the level of provincial administration"; and so on.

Could there be a more shameless apologia for the big bourgeoisie, for the Nehru-Patel predatory policy, than such an 'ultraleftist' stand? It is the polit bureau's policy in fact that is nothing but a paraphrase of Sardar Patel's slogan.

Secondly, the polit bureau condemns the slogan as “only satisfying the rich peasant and whetting his appetite for procuring land”. Hence once again is expressed nothing but the crudest and most bankrupt left-sectarianism. The most important driving force of the various movements of the nationalities is the peasantry fighting under the leadership of the working class. This is what the Lenin-Stalin principles on the national question teach us, this is what is meant by Stalin’s dictum that the “national question is a peasant question”. But our ultrarevolutionary polit bureau dismisses all this by saying that the slogan “only satisfied the rich peasant and whets his appetite for procuring land—refusing even to learn from life and to see how the slogan of dissolution of the state, etc. is a mobilising slogan that rouses vast masses of the common people of all the three nationalities.

One has only to contrast this bankrupt understanding of the polit bureau with the brilliant and pregnant formulation Balabushevich makes in connection with the Telangana struggle: “It was the combination of the anti-feudal and the national struggle which conditioned the particular acuteness of the peasant struggle in Telangana.” A combination which—we may add—the polit bureau tried its best to obstruct and hamper by its crude left sectarian poohpooing of the national question.

Finally, the polit bureau reaches the limit of left sectarian heights by declaring off-hand that the slogan “effectively sidetracks attention from a united fight against the Indian Union administration”, that it “gives a free charter to the Indian Union administration”, etc. This is nothing but the cheapest demagogy. The slogan far from “sidetracking” in fact focuses and strengthens a united fight against the Nehru-Patel regime. It is a weapon of the most effective and concentrated fight against the Indian Union administration, in as much as it enables the combination of the anti-feudal and national struggle: it is the polit bureau’s slogan that gives a free charter to the Nehru-Patel administration.

. To cover up its bankrupt policy the polit bureau resorts to statements such as: “Those who think that joining the territories to the province automatically eliminates feudalism are wrong” Whom is the polit bureau accusing of thinking such things? The Andhra secretariat—which has been placed at the head of the armed struggle

against the Nizam for the last four years—certainly cannot be accused of such a fatuous thing. In fact these and similar words of the polit bureau are only window dressing for its real policy—a policy of national nihilism—as is made clear by the opening words of the abovequoted statement—“Even when virtually it is said that the slogan to be realised as part of people’s democracy, in the present context, it plays a reactionary role.”

Such has been the polit bureau’s policy on one of the most important and crucial issues that have arisen on the national question during this period—and that too in connection with the great *Telangana struggle*.

The same line—the line of countering the demand for autonomous linguistic provinces and dissolution of states by advancing the left-sectarian slogan of “self-determination of toilers” as against self-determination of nations—was virtually advocated by the polit bureau in regard to the movements for United kerala, Samyukta Karnataka, Samyukta maharashtra, etc. members of the polit bureau have consistently poohpooed the Vishal Andhra slogan and accused the Andhra secretariat of “small-nation chauvinism”, of “kulak nationalism”, and so on, in supporting and consistently fighting for Vishal Andhra slogan. The polit bureau did this in the name of fighting “bourgeois nationalism” of the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nationalities.

Has the polit bureau by its policy fought “bourgeois nationalism” of the oppressed nationalities? On the contrary. In the course of the last two years, during which the movement for linguistic provinces came forward and gained ground considerably, the polit bureau’s policy, wherever it was applied, only led to the entire initiative in this movement passing unchallenged into the hands of the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nationalities and helped it to utilise this movement for its own reactionary purpose.

In fact the polit bureau has not combated small-nation chauvinism. All it has done is to aid and strengthen the reactionary chauvinism and national oppression of the ruling big bourgeoisie, the agent of Anglo-American imperialism.

The polit bureau member from Andhra in his letters to the general secretary as early as the middle of 1949 brought to his notice the

growing acuteness of the national question, of the question of linguistic provinces and emphasised the urgency of the working class party seizing the initiative on this question from the hands of the bourgeois elements who were diverting it into wrong and reactionary channels. But the polit bureau turned a deaf ear to all this—and never learn anything from what actually life was demonstrating with such force.

All the erroneous theories on the national question were developed by the general secretary in a document written by him into a complete system on the basis of the wrong anti-Stalinist theory that “all national movements are bourgeois movements” and that therefore only the slogan of “self-determination of toilers” is a valid slogan. This document was sent to all members of the central committee as an inner-CC document for discussion. Fortunately, however, before matters proceeded further, the line of the Cominform bureau came and saved the party from further debacle.

The slogan of the polit bureau of “self-determination of toilers”—pitted against the slogan of self-determination of nations—is nothing new in the history of distortion and revisionism of Marxism-Leninism. While drawing up and discussing the new programme prior to the eighth congress of the Bolshevik Party in 1919, Bukharin had advanced precisely this slogan and Lenin had attacked and smashed it in the course of the report he delivered at the congress, in the following words :

“I have to say the same thing with regard to the national question. Here too the wish is father to the thought with Bukharin. He says that it is impossible to admit the right of nations to self-determination. A nation implies the bourgeoisie together with the proletariat, And are we, the proletarians, to recognise the right to self-determination of the despised bourgeoisie? That is absolutely incompatible! Pardon me, it is compatible with what actually exist. If you eliminate this, the result will be sheer fantasy....

“I want to recognise only the right of the toiling classes to self determination’, says Bukharin. That is to say, you want to recognise something that has not been achieved in a single country except Russia. That is ridiculous...

“We say that account must be taken of the stage at which the given nation finds itself on the way from medievalism to bourgeois

democracy, and from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy. That is absolutely correct. All nations have the right to self-determination..... The vast majority, most likely nine-tenths of the population of the earth, are on the way from medievalism to bourgeois democracy and from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy. This is an absolutely inevitable course. More cannot be said because it would be wrong because it would not be what actually exists. To reject the self-determination of nations and insert the self-determination of the toilers would be absolutely wrong because this statement of the question does not reckon with the difficulties, with the zigzag course which differentiation within a nation takes....

“Our programme must not speak of the self-determination of the toilers, because that would be wrong. It must speak of what actually exists. Since nations are at different stages on the road from medievalism to bourgeois democracy and from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy, this thesis of our programme is absolutely right. With us there have been very many zigzags on this road. Every nation must secure the right to self-determination and that will make the self-determination of the toilers easier.”

All the above was said by Lenin while concretely speaking of self-determination in relation to countries like Finland, Poland and Germany. Lenin attacked the slogan of self-determination of toilers and justified the slogan of self-determination of nationalities—even in the contest were the proletarian revolution had already succeeded in Russia and when the question of self-determination arose concretely in relation to countries like Finland, Poland and Germany where a revolutionary situation for socialist revolution was fast maturing. If that be so, how much more are Lenin’s words applicable to the situation in India today—a semi-colonial country where bourgeois-democratic revolution in the main is yet to be completed?

The slogan of the polit bureau of self-determination of toilers proceeds from the anti-Leninist, anti-Stalinist premises that “all national movements are bourgeois movements”. The polit bureau applies this premise to its trotskyite understanding of the post-war period being dominated by the one exclusive contradiction, namely, that between capital and labour, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and arrives at this conclusion by the following syllogism.

All national movements are bourgeois movements.

All bourgeois movements in this period are reactionary.

Hence all national movements in this period are reactionary.

Hence only the slogan of self-determination of toilers remains.

This whole thing is nothing but a piece of the crudest trotskyist monstrosity.

The polit bureau's premise itself is a trotskyist distortion of Leninism. Lenin and Stalin teach us that the national question is in essence a peasant question though anti-imperialist sections of the bourgeoisie may also participate in the national movements and even lead them for a time. Therefore Lenin-Stalin doctrine of proletarian hegemony in the democratic revolution and of fighting alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry demands that the working class should seize the leadership on the national question and consolidate its alliance with the peasantry. On this question by combining the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal struggle with the national struggle into on stream of people's democratic revolution.

Here is how Stalin assesses the significance of the national question in the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution.

"The national problem is a part of the general problem of the proletarian revolution, a part of the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

"The question presents itself as follows: Are the revolutionary possibilities latent in the revolutionary liberation movement of the oppressed countries already exhausted or not: and if not, is there any hope, any ground to expect that these possibilities can be utilised for the proletarian revolution, that the dependent and colonial countries can be transformed from a reserve of the imperialist bourgeoisie into a reserve of the revolutionary proletariat, into an ally of the latter?

"Leninism replies to this question in the affirmative, that is, to the effect that it recognise the latest revolutionary capabilities of the national-liberation movement of the oppressed countries, and to the effect that it is possible to use these for the purpose of the common enemy, for the purpose of overthrowing imperialism. The mechanics of the development of imperialism, the imperialist wars and the revolution in Russia wholly confirm the conclusions of Leninism on these score.



“Hence the necessity for the proletariat to support—resolutely and actively to support—the national liberation movement of the oppressed and dependent peoples” (Problems of Leninism).

The above gives the correct understanding of the national question—and not the trotskyist thesis of the polit bureau.

The bankruptcy of the polit bureau’s trotskyite thesis—that all the possibilities of the national question have been exhausted since the present period is the era of the straight fight of capital versus labour on a world scale and nothing else—and the correctness of the Stalinist analysis is demonstrated with striking force by the course of the second world war itself. During the second world war, Europe itself—comprising advanced and medium capitalist countries—was the arena of a great liberation struggle of a number of nations against the hitlerite yoke, a struggle in which, for a period, communist parties closely linked the national liberation struggle with the struggle against the capitalist and landlords, discredited by capitulation to hitlerite Germany or collaboration with it—and with the struggle for the overthrow of the rule of the capitalist and landlords.

Zhdanov, in the report he delivered at the nine parties conference in September 1947, stressed the importance of the national liberation aspect of the struggle in the period following the second world war, when American imperialism had risen to take the place of hitler-fascism. Zhdanov said as follows:

“Communists must support all the really patriotic elements who do not want their countries imposed upon, who want to resist their enthralment to foreign capital and to uphold their national sovereignty. The communist must be the leaders in enlisting all anti-fascist and freedom-loving elements in the struggle against the new American expansionist plans for the enslavement of Europe.”

If such continues to be the potency of the national question in the present period even in the case of the advanced capitalist countries of Europe, how much more is it so in the case of a semi-colonial country like India where the people’s democratic revolution “cannot but bear in the first place an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal character?” (Zhukov).

Thus both the polit bureau's premise and its conclusions on the national question are nothing but a repudiation of Marxism-Leninism.

The policy of the polit bureau on the national question has had very harmful consequences for the movement during the last two years. We are here pointing out only a few of these. In a period when the movements for Samyukta Maharashtra, Samyukta Karnataka, United Kerala etc. were rising and gaining ground the policy of the polit bureau left the party paralysed and helpless to make any impact on this movement and put them on corrected rails, and thus gave the bourgeoisie a free hand to sabotage them. In the case of Vishal Andhra movement, whatever the Andhra committee was able to do was in spite of the line of the polit bureau—and taking advantage of certain formal loopholes left in it.

Similarly this policy of the polit bureau led to the party taking the Imperialist Mountbatten partition for granted: failing to effectively expose its evil effects and the manner in which imperialism was utilising Indo-Pakistan conflict to strengthen its grip on both the states; and failing to build the unity of the democratic movement in the Indian Union and Pakistan as the indispensable condition for the liberation of both these dominions from imperialist oppression.

It has become of utmost importance today to root out all these mistakes and to adopt a correct policy on the national question based on Marxism-Leninism, because the national question assumes tremendous importance in the present stage of our people's democratic revolution in India. The ruling clique not only continues the imperialist policy of the national oppression: but in order to disrupt the democratic movement and retain its monopolistic domination incites national conflicts all round—between Bengalis and Biharis, between Tamilians and Andhras, between Bengalis and Assamese. And so on. It pursues a policy of racial, communal and national discrimination all round. And above all the imperialist policy of division and rule continues in a new form after partition—by fanning the Pakistan conflict in order to strengthen its own

policy on the national question will alone  
ly against the disruptive policy of the  
bourgeois combine and to smash the  
right for self-determination of the various

nationalities and the tribal peoples of India and Pakistan is integrally linked up with the struggle for national liberation from imperialist oppression. It must be led by the working class and the Communist Party.

Correct national policy towards the tribal and semi-tribal peoples and their demands for autonomous regions is absolutely essential in the present period of extending armed struggle and formulation of armed guerilla bases leading to liberation bases and formation of liberation armies. The people of such areas in suitable cases shall have the right to secede from the state by a democratic verdict.

It is the combination of the anti-feudal with the national struggle that will give the most effective striking power to the revolutionary forces, taking to the new forms of struggle linked up with agrarian revolution in the present period. That is the lesson of Telangana.

The Communist Party must stand and fight for the equality of all nations, and semi-nationalities growing as nations, equal development of their language, culture and economic life, self-determination of all nationalities into a voluntary union.

The Lenin-Stalin principle of national equality and self-determination has been applied with brilliant success in the USSR and constitutes the model for the solution of national, racial and communal conflicts in all countries. It is by correct application of these principles alone that we in our country can achieved the solution of communal and racial conflicts, the equality of all nationalities, *elimination of religious-communal division of peoples, and finally, unification of India and Pakistan into a voluntary union of people's democratic republics.* The people's democracy in the Indian subcontinent can be realised only by overthrowing both the reactionary regimes of India and Pakistan.

### **Attack On Comrade Mao Tse-tung**

This self-critical note however will be incomplete without touching on the formulations of the polit bureau attacking Mao Tse-tung.

It is evident for anybody who has read the *Tactical Line* that our polit bureau has delivered a pungent and arrogant attack on the leader of the Chinese Communist Party and his views contained in the pamphlet *New Democracy*. How did this find a place in the document

of the polit bureau? Perhaps, the polit bureau might have felt that without attacking the formulations of Mao Tse-tung on new democracy it could not brush aside the issue raised by the Andhra secretariat, which extensively quoted from Mao Tse-tung's writings in support of its stand.

We now proceed to discuss not the propriety or otherwise of attacking a brother party in the way the polit bureau has done; we confine ourselves to its political aspect, i.e. what wrong politics on the part of the polit bureau led to such attacks, what harm it did to the revolutionary movement in India, and what effect it had on the bonds of solidarity with the fighting Chinese people and their party, the Communist Party.

It is one thing if the polit bureau were to correct the Andhra secretariat, which in its over enthusiasm for the victorious Chinese struggle and for the glorious party and its leader had said that the contents of Mao Tse-tung's *New Democracy* are a "new discovery", etc. That would have been correct. But what the polit bureau has done is not that. It has seized this opportunity and has gone full length in attacking downright the pamphlet on *New Democracy* by Mao Tse-tung. Does it attack and criticise it in a straightforward and Bolshevik manner? No, it does not. It indulges in insinuations and sly suggestions which deride the pamphlet *New Democracy* downright. The manner and method it has chosen is not in good taste for any Marxist. And in this case, for no less a body than the leadership of the Communist Party of India.

It pretends not to sit in judgement over Mao Tse-tung's *New Democracy*. But in reality it made all or nearly all remarks which constitute enough judgement on Mao.

Let us examine how it is so.

What does the polit bureau mean when it says "singularly enough there was no reference to this new addition to Marxism in the conference of nine parties", and that "one of the most authoritative conferences of Marxists has not thought fit recommended" the pamphlet *New Democracy*? Is it not plain that this amounts in substance to nothing but saying that Mao's *New Democracy* is rejected by world communist thought?

Let us ask : Was the nine parties' conference convened with the sole purpose of, or was it the occasion to, assessing various

theoretical works and recommended some and reject others? Not only as there no reference to or recommendation of Mao's *New Democracy* at the nine parties' conference, there were a lot of Marxist theoretical works for which there was equally no reference or recommendation at the conference. Does the polit bureau mean that all that was not referred to or recommended should be taken as only condemned there?

This method of borrowing the name of the nine parties' conference in aid of one's own dubious reading is anything but Bolshevik.

The polit bureau says that the Andhra secretariat should have thought "ten times before recommending" such pamphlets as *New Democracy*. True, indeed. But the polit bureau must have thought hundred times before coming out with open attacks on Mao Tse-tung and his formulations, when the Communist party of China under the leadership of Mao is conducting such historic struggle as the Chinese revolution.

The polit bureau says "such claims of discoveries have proved too often to be thin cloaks for revisionism (Tito, Browder, etc.)". It is patent on the face of it for anybody to see that what the polit bureau is talking here is that the pamphlet *New Democracy* is under fire here. Is not the polit bureau placing Mao Tse-tung's *New Democracy* on a par with Browder's reformism and Tito's trotskyism? And it is to be noted that this stuff is solemnly written when the whole imperialist press is slandering Mao that he is an 'Eastern Tito', etc.!

The imperialists did it with the purpose of maligning the Communist Party of China and disrupting the solidarity of the world communist front. Our polit bureau drifts into assisting the slander.

Peculiarly enough, the polit bureau talks as though the formulations in *New Democracy* are in total variance with the formulations made in Zhdanov's report. There is nothing farther from truth than this. Is it not a fact that Mao's article on "Dictatorship of People's Democracy", which stuck to almost all the fundamentals he had made in his pamphlet *New Democracy*, is published not only in the organ of the information bureau of communist and workers' parties, but also was issued as a pamphlet in Moscow by the CPSU(B)? It is plain to anybody who is acquainted with the ABC

of Marxism that it is not Mao's formulations that are at variance with Zhdanov's, but it is the interpretation of the polit bureau of the formulations of both mao and Zhdanov which are totally wrong and at variance with Marxism-Leninism.

The polit bureau does not stop here.

While on the one hand saying that "this is not the place to sit in judgement on Mao", on the other it gets down to it in the name of answering the Andhra secretariat.

Would it be a harsh judgement if its long harangue is characterised as the cheapest demagogy? But this is the only characterisation any serious Marxist can make about it.

When and where is it that Mao made the formulations attacked by the polit bureau?—When the Chiang Kai-shek clique was trying to play on the instincts of private property, bent upon scaring away certain sections and classes from the united national front, when the minimum programme of the Chinese Communist Party was being distorted. Mao Tse-tung had clinched them and explained the minimum programme of new democracy. ✕

Why did the Andhra secretariat quote it? Because it was facing the arguments that the struggle in the stage of new democracy is a struggle directed against "entire capital", and thus basically socialist, etc. and it had to say that it was not so. Not only was the fight not against "entire capital", but a sector of private capital would be encouraged and developed to a certain extent in order to advance the revolution. But the polit bureau neither bothers what the formulation of Mao actually means nor the context in which it was made and quoted.

Is this formulation of Mao Tse-tung reactionary? Has he anywhere spoken of the necessity of development of capitalism in China as the predominant form? Has he not exactly fought against such contention and abundantly made clear that it cannot be so in the present era? The polit bureau itself in its subsequent arguments in the *Tactical Line* quoted enough of Mao to that effect. Then how has the formulation of Mao become reactionary? The contention goes, as we understand, the phrase "development of capitalism" is said to be reactionary and it is only permissible, according to the polit bureau, to use the formulation "allowing private sector of

capitalism” or “squeezing it out”, etc. Whatever the confusion it makes or the play upon phrases shorn out of context, the point to be made clear here is that it is absolutely correct and in line with Lenin and Stalin and nothing is wrong with it.

Are the words “development of capitalism” taboo for Marxist? No, it is not. Let us see from the quotations from no less persons than Lenin and Stalin.

“As a matter of fact, what is taking place in our country now is not a one-sided process of restoration of capitalism, but a two-sided process of development of capitalism and development of socialism—a contradictory process of struggle between the socialist elements and the capitalist elements, a process in which the socialist elements are overcoming the capitalist elements” (Stalin, *On the Problems of Leninism*).

“Without changing its essence, the proletarian state may permit free trade and the development of capitalism only within certain bounds, and only on the condition that the state regulates (supervises, controls, determines the forms and methods of etc.) private trade and private capitalism” (Lenin, “Role and Functions of Trade Unions under the New Economic Policy”).

Any number of such formulations from the classics can be multiplied.

These are said in connection with the new economic policy practised for a while in Russia. Is this new economic policy only a Russian feature? No, it is wrong to think so, Here is what Stalin says:

“Can the capitalist countries, even the most developed of them, do without NEP in the transition from capitalism to socialism? I think not. In one degree or another, the new economic policy, with its market ties, and the stabilisation of these market ties, will be absolutely indispensable for every capitalist country in the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

If such is the case, how is Mao wrong in his formulation when he is speaking of his country, where the production forces are far from developed and have been hindered by imperialist-feudal reaction? Does the above teaching of Stalin apply to China all the more or not? What Mao is speaking about is the new democratic republic

and a planned economy for it, i.e. the new democratic economy. Either this plan must specifically include in it the protection and development of private sector of capital to a certain extent, or the plan ceases to be a plan it left to spontaneity.

Thus what Mao formulated is correct. It is not Mao's formulations that are counter-revolutionary, but the views of those who try to dispense away with NEP and development of capitalism that it implies, and advance the slogan of straight "squeezing away" of all capitalism—without reckoning with the realities—which are counter-revolutionary.

Before we assess the damage caused in the party ranks, let us point out the way in which the enemies have utilised this attack on Mao Tse-tung. The bourgeois press has played it up. The petty-bourgeois and socialist press in India has utilised it to discredit the party and its leadership in the eyes of the people, pitting the policies of the Communist Party of India against Mao and the Chinese Communist Party. Coming to the concrete experience in our own province, Andhra, enemies of the party and the gang of renegades have utilised this to discredit both the Communist Party of India and in particular the Andhra leadership.

That is in brief for the above.

The entire camp of lefts and genuine party sympathisers fell into big confusion with the release of this document to the press.

Lastly, coming to the party ranks, a few instances from our own experience will speak eloquently for themselves.

One district committee has sent round a circular note in which it wanted to draw attention of the cadre to the importance of the study of the international Marxist journals. In it, it notes that the *China Digest* is not of any importance and rarely some good articles may appear in it and hence the cadres need not bother with reading it regularly.

One important city district committee set for itself the task of scanning every line in the *China Digest* not with the intention of learning from it but only to "discover" reformism in it.

One comrade (who for some time was a member of an area committee in Telangana) began to talk loosely of Mao as Tito, etc., and question not only his formulations, but even certain decisions of the Chinese people's consultative council.



Further, we have a number of reports of elements who began to run riot calling Mao names.

In a word, it has become very difficult for the Andhra secretariat to quote or cite anything from the Chinese communist literature that is reaching its hand.

Is further enumeration necessary?

And the fact has to be noted that all this happens in a province (Andhra) where Mao and the Chinese Communist Party are held in high esteem and love, and are the main inspiration behind the struggles in Telangana, for the Telangana way.

When such is the case with Andhra, one can very well guess the position in other provinces.

How wrongly the cadre was educated and how impossible it has become to imbibe the Chinese lessons and what an impediment it has all been!

How are we to account for all this except by the wrong education of the party by the polit bureau?

Is what is done in the best communist traditions? Evidently not.

Another interesting thing is to observe the way in which the mind of the general secretary was working.

In a letter dated 12 July 1949 to another member of the polit bureau (Adhikari), criticism him for the publication of the part in the *Tactical Line on Strategy and Tactics in the Communist* (in fact it was published in Bengali earlier) he writes: "Firstly, should you have come out with an attack on Mao's past formulations when China's leaders are swiftly changing their line and are bringing about changes of world historic importance? Even now, I would not like anything from Mao to be uncritically published in our paper. Yet criticism at this stage—such sharp criticism to be made public, when Mao is heading changes of world historic significance is wrong."

The General Secretary in his make-believe observation finds that the Chinese Communist Party is changing its line and correcting its mistakes. Again it is a vain attempt to satisfy oneself that the polit bureau is right and the Chinese Communist Party is wrong.

The second point is, the General Secretary has banned the publication of anything from Mao and critically in our press. Of course this "critical" attitude must be the reason why such an

important contribution as the article on the “Dictatorship of people’s Democracy” by Mao finds no place in our central party press, even though it did appear in the organ of the Cominform bureau!

Thus the polit bureau started with censoring Mao-Tse-tung and ended by censoring the organ of the Cominform bureau itself.

This attitude of our polit bureau to the brother parties and their leaders is sharply criticised by Palme Dutt in his letter to a party member which was forwarded by the Andhra provincial committee to the polit bureau as early as 15 August 1949.

To quote from Palme Dutt’s letter: “One last point I may make from one who has been a friend and helper to the Indian party from its earliest days. You are at present conducting a magnificent battle which we are following with deepest sympathy and admiration but we are a little concern at the tendency shown at present in some document to find fault with the majority of other communist party, to find the British party wrong, the French party wrong, the Chinese party wrong, Mao Tse-tung wrong, etc. This tendency is not healthy one and if unchecked, could lead to the kind of outlook that has reached and extreme form in the Yugoslav party.”

Is not this sharp but friendly criticism from Palme Dutt enough to make the polit bureau rethink seriously, and have a retrospective glance at its writings and outlook? But the pity of it was, it was falling on deaf ears.

Now, before closing this topic we want to point out sharply that it will not be enough to say that this attack was wrong. What we have to understand is that there is politics, very serious politics behind this attack. To try to separate the attacks from the politics behind them is to deceive oneself.

It is the dangerous left-deviation on a series of issues on the part of the polit bureau that culminated in the stupid, abusive, uncomradely and harmful attack on Mao Tse-tung.

That is the crux of the matter.

### **Conclusion**

We thus see that taking all the questions dealt with above—stage and strategy of the revolution, people’s democracy, agrarian question, national question, question of tactics and forms of struggle and the Chinese path—the polit bureau represents a consistent left-sectarian

system. The polit bureau produced a fullfledged Trotskyite thesis of 'decolonisation' and of one-stage revolution in the form of the three documents—*On People's Democracy*, *On Agrarian Question*, and *Tactical Line*—nullified all the correct things and developed fully all the wrong things in the political thesis, threw overboard all the teachings of Lenin and Stalin and the Communist International on imperialism and colonial revolutions and on the national question, distorted Zhdanov's report, turned a blind-eye to the valuable articles of the brother parties, refused to learn anything from the rich experience of the national-liberation movement in China, and finally threw to the winds the principles of fraternal relations of world communist parties to the extent of open slander of Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communist Party.

In this document we have confined ourselves to a general critique of the political line of the polit bureau embodied in its three documents (summed up above). We have not gone into the question of party organisation and the Titoite organisational methods pursued by the polit bureau nor into details about the slogans given by the polit bureau at different times for the various mass front (trade union, kisan, student, women, jails, etc.). Without this, no doubt, the document is incomplete. But this incompleteness as well as some of the other shortcomings which this document may have are due to the following unavoidable circumstances, circumstances beyond our control.

It was by the middle of 1 June 1949 that the majority of the Andhra secretariat had come to the conclusion that all the three polit bureau documents were totally on the wrong lines and were grave departures from Marxism-Leninism. A draft critical document was prepared by us at that time, but it was not fully finalised and the issue was shelved by us at that stage because by then we had begun to see the Titoite organisational methods pursued by the polit bureau in practice and we were convinced that under those circumstances, the polit bureau, if it received the critical document of ours, would run amuck and by wielding the 'rod of discipline' against the Andhra provincial committee, might dissolve the secretariat and this disruptive step in the situation prevailing in Andhra and Telangana would spell disaster to the armed struggle that was being carried on there. The organisational practice of the

polit bureau subsequently confirmed our fears. It was only with the Peking Conference and Liu Shao-chi's opening speech at that conference that we got emboldened again and decided to carry on the inner-party struggle. Our plan was to prepare a full document in which political, organisational and different mass fronts, etc., would be critically reviewed and assessed. But due to the appearance to the editorial of *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy* and subsequent developments our time was taken up with other more pressing work and we could not complete the document we had planned. Only the political part was completed and even that had to be completed in a hurried manner.

This will explain some of the shortcomings of this document, the most important of which being its incompleteness.

Regarding party organisation and the different mass front, we can only say here in a nutshell that the line of the polit bureau, and its practice, its Trotskyite-Titoite left-sectarian policy, slogans and organisational methods, have produced havoc and brought the party and the different mass fronts to the verge of liquidation, by the time of the open and direct political intervention by the Cominform bureau. If in spite of this the agrarian struggle continued and expanded in Telangana, Andhra and the hill border regions of Mymensingh, it is because comrades there learning from life experience itself and forced by it bypassed the polit bureau's sectarian documents and marched forward, in spite of them, nor because of them. No doubt sometimes even in pursuit of a correct line a certain amount of disorganisation may occur in the mass front in the course of acute class struggles. But in such cases the disorganisation occurs despite a correct line. This is quite different however from what has happened in the course of the last two years. In this case the polit bureau's left-adventurist policy aggravated and accentuated the disorganisation and carried it to the point of virtual disruption and liquidation of the mass fronts and the party.

Left-sectarianism and its manifestations on every front have to be rooted out if the party is to march forward along the glorious path blazed out for us by our Chinese brethren. At the same time the history of our party during the last twenty years teaches us a most valuable lesson—a lesson which we never learnt so far due to our

political immaturity and one which we can ignore today only at our peril. That lesson is: While fighting one deviation, beware of swinging to the other extreme, beware of stepping into the opposite type of deviation. While fighting one demon, beware of giving quarter to the other demon.

In the period prior to 1936, our party was guilty of gross left-sectarian errors, errors to which the seventh world congress of the Communist International drew our pointed attention (Wang Ming's report). In the subsequent period Joshi pretended to fight left-sectarianism, but what he did in reality was to take the party neck-deep into the bog of right-reformism. The second party congress rescued the party from this bog, but immediately came the new polit bureau and in the name of fight against right-reformism it took the party straight into the worst and crudest left-sectarianism and left-adventurism. It was because in the earlier period Joshi had never in reality fought left-sectarianism that it could rear its head immediately after the second party congress and assume such monstrous proportions within the last two years.

The polit bureau no more fought right-reformism in reality than Joshi had fought left-sectarianism in the earlier period; both of them while fooling the ranks and the people with seemingly revolutionary slogans in reality had only fought against the correct revolutionary line.

The history of the party teaches us:

Firstly: due to our political immaturity in the past, every time we have woken up to the danger of one type of deviation, we have only, in the name of fighting it, swung over to the other type of deviation.

Secondly: it is un-Marxian to say that one anti-Marxian deviation can be fought in reality with another anti-Marxian deviation. Both right-reformism and left-sectarianism carry on a mock fight against each other as long as there is no correct line, but as soon as a correct line is put forward both resort to attacking it from two opposite ends. In fact both right-reformism and left-sectarianism are only two forms of the same basic disease—bourgeois nationalism, the worst enemy of the proletarian party.

The social conditions of a colonial country like India in which our party operates make our party particularly vulnerable to the

disease of bourgeois-nationalism. During the reformist period, bourgeois nationalism was never fought but on the contrary—it may monstrous inroads into the party and corroded its very vitals. Either the party fights out bourgeois-nationalism ruthlessly and roots it out and keeps constant vigilance against it; or bourgeois-nationalism counterattacks the party and destroys its very vitals, its social root being the petty-bourgeois composition of the party. It is the manifestation of this that is seen during the last two years in another form, in the form of the left-sectarian monster.

That is why today we must for the first time really assimilate the lessons taught by our party's history in the course of the last twenty years, the lessons taught by the history of the international communist movement. We must conduct a simultaneous fight on two fronts—both against right-reformism and left-sectarianism. We must guard the party against every deviation from Marxism-Leninism and towards bourgeois nationalism, be it of the right-reformist variety or of the left-sectarian variety.

In this connection, the following words of Stalin spoken in 1928 on the right and left deviations inside the CPSU(B) are full of meaning for us.

“You see, therefore, that both dangers, the ‘left’ and right, both these deviations from the Leninist line, the right and the ‘left’ lead to the same results, although from different directions.

“Which of these dangers is worse ? In my opinion one is as bad as the other ’ (“The Right Danger in the CPSU-B”)

It is necessary to give such a strong warning today about the simultaneous fight the party has to conduct on two fronts—both against the right—and the left-deviations. Left-sectarianism has run its full course and reached almost a climax in the course of the last two years. And now when we are correcting it and rooting it out, there is every likelihood that right-reformism, which the old polit bureau in reality never fought and which therefore had been lying dormant all the time, may raise its head again under cover of fight against sectarianism and the havoc caused by it among the party ranks. This danger is real because so long as bourgeois-nationalism whose social roots inside our party are deep has not been fought successfully, it will raise its head in the form of that deviation which

is less obvious at the moment and against which we are off our guard. A danger signal for this is already there in the fact that P.C.Joshi has come forward again with his old banner—this time with the thesis that India is not yet ripe for armed struggle.

That is why while not for a moment relaxing our fight against left-sectarianism, we must on no account permit the demon of right-reformism to raise its head again. We must simultaneously fight against both these demons ruthlessly. It is in essence a single fight—the fight against bourgeois nationalism, which will find all forms of penetration into the party. This alone will enable us to go on the correct path, the revolutionary path of Marxism-Leninism.

The purpose of the above critique is to enable us to correct ourselves and rebuild the party and the mass movements as rapidly as possible so that they become fit instruments for discharging the great responsibility which devolves on our shoulders today.

The class enemies and their agents, the renegades from the party, are making every effort to capitalise the confusion inside the party and in the mass fronts today in order to disrupt the party and try to split it, imperialism and the bourgeoisie are feverishly attacking the party in order to liquidate it even before the party is able to get out of the present bog and on to the highway of the invincible Chinese path. The comments in the bourgeois press—that a struggle is going on inside the party today “between the followers of Ranadive and the followers of Joshi”—reveal the wish and the hope of the bourgeoisie and its efforts to create confusion that our party would, instead of getting on to the correct revolutionary path, once again go back to the old reformist line which would suit it perfectly.

*The situation today is such that the ideological fight to clean out all the sectarian and reformist rubbish that has accumulated inside the party in the course of the last several years has to be carried out simultaneously with the immediate political-organisational tasks facing the party—of proceeding steadily to put the party on the rails of armed struggle in the countryside and rebuild the movement in the cities and working class centres on the basis of our new line and tactics. To forget that one cannot be carried out without the other, to*

forget that both have to be simultaneously fulfilled, would only lead to failure to snatch back the lost initiative and to liquidation of the party and of the revolutionary movement altogether.

We must fight "right" and "left" disruption and all the manifestations of the remnants of both the deviations and rebuild the party, suited to the conditions of strict illegality, firmly on the basis of Lenin-Stalin principle. We must conduct the inner-party struggle not in the vulgar spirit of bureaucratic liquidation as was done so far, but in the spirit of the Lenin-Stalin principles of Bolshevisation. These principles mean the fullest inner-party democracy and the exercise of criticism and self-criticism at the same time combined with iron discipline and strict centralisation. We must bolshevise the party by deepening our knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and learning to apply it to our daily problems, by giving our cadres systematic political and military training so that they are able to lead the armed struggle with initiative, flexibility of tactics and firmness of purpose and determination in the face of difficulties; by careful selection and rapid promotion of the best-tested cadre from the ranks of the working class and toil in masses in particular to leadership: by ideological remoulding of the entire party ranks in the spirit of proletarian internationalism and unity of will and action of the world communist movement under the lead of Stalin. Such bolshevisation of the party alone will make it a worthy instrument to lead our country and our people on the glorious Chinese path.

We must reestablish fraternal relations with our brother parties and take immediate steps to restore in our party the principle of fraternal cooperation and brotherhood of the world communist movement which have been thoroughly disrupted during the earlier period of right reformism and left-sectarianism.

Political guidance and assistance from the Cominform bureau and our brother communist parties is one of the surest guarantees that we shall be able to proceed on the correct path.

The mass organisations in the towns and the countryside—the trade unions, kisan sabhas, agricultural labourers organisations, students', youth, women's organisations, etc.—which lie shattered and disrupted today thus reducing the party to utter isolation from the masses, have to be rebuilt anew, steadily and persistently. They are vital as transmission belts between the party and the non-party



masses, without them the party will lose its links with the masses, and hence the instruments for carrying out its policy into action. The mass organisations must be built up in such a manner that they embody the unity of the toiling masses in the fight for their vital day-to-day demands and in the struggle for national liberation.

We must conduct the most patient and persistent fight to build up the unity of the working class and restore the disastrous split in the ranks of the trade-union movement. In this we must combine the most patient efforts to win over workers of all other sections and under the influence of all other parties and forge joint action with them while at the same time carrying on the most ruthless exposure, on principle, of all splitters like INTUC and Socialist Party leadership, etc. We must carry on work inside every organisation where the masses are to be found—hence the necessity to work inside all those reformist rival unions (INTUC, socialist) which have any mass influence.

We must fraternise with the ranks of the left parties, mass organisations, groups and individuals, to organise joint actions wherever and whenever possible and thus build the democratic front as the anti-imperialist unity of all parties, groups and individuals willing to fight for national freedom and independence of the country. We must remember that under present condition, a rapid process of disillusionment is taking place inside these left parties and with left elements in general, a process that creates very favourable conditions for building up such fraternisation and joint front.

We must learn to combine legal with illegal methods of struggle in such a flexible manner that the party is able to deliver the most telling and shattering blows on the enemy and achieve maximum results with minimum loss to itself.

We must develop the peace campaign as a part of the struggle for national liberation so that the peace movement and the national-liberation struggle go hand in hand, strengthening each other and delivering joint blows against Anglo-American imperialism and its native servitors.

Through the fulfilment of all those tasks alone can the party come forward as a real Bolshevik party, as an instrument capable of fulfilling the great responsibility of leading the Indian revolution,

in the footsteps of our great Chinese brothers, capable of leading the armed struggle, of taking our people on to the Chinese path, of building up the united front of all anti-imperialist classes, parties, groups, and individuals that are willing to fight for the national liberation of the country; capable of leading India in the victorious fight for people's democracy and socialism under the banner of the great world communist movement led by the invincible Soviet Union and its wise leader, Stalin.

## A Note on the Present Situation in our Party \*

### Why this Note

We are submitting this note to the central committee of our party requesting it to circulate it in the ranks. It contains our views on the present political line and organisational decisions of the CC.

As can be seen from the note, we are in basic disagreement with the present line of the CC as formulated in various CC documents and also with the organisational methods adopted by the CC. We are of the opinion that the new line is only a variant of the same old line that worked havoc for two years and a half and brought the party to the verge of disaster, that it is a line based on complete distortion of the Cominform editorial of 27 January, that it is a line of liquidation of the party. Further, that not merely in its political policies but also in its organisational methods, the new CC is pursuing the same old path as before—bureaucratic ‘reorganisation’ of committees, taking in only those who agree with its present bankrupt policies and asking those who do not agree with them to ‘stand aside’.

The new CC has issued many documents till now. There is not however a single document in which any attempt has been made to make an *analysis of the actual situation in the country*, an analysis which is obligatory for a Marxist party for working out a tactical line. Lenin taught us that the most characteristic feature of petty-bourgeois revolutionism is the failure to make “a strictly objective estimate of the class forces and their inter-relation before undertaking any political action”.

Lenin speaks of “any political action”, our CC however works out a whole *political line* without any reference to the actual situation in the country, the state of the mass movement and our relation to that movement.

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\* Prepared by Ajoy Ghosh (Probodh Chandra), S.A. Dange (Prabhakar) and S.V.Ghate (Purushottam) and circulated on 30.9.1950.

Secondly, the party documents give no idea of the state of the party, its strength, its influence, its mobilising and striking power vis-a-vis the other parties, its present links with the masses.

Thirdly, there is no mass policy in relation to any concrete issue facing our people.

Fourthly, the CC documents ignore the *specific* tasks set before us by the Cominform editorial of 27 January and work out a line which is a distortion of that editorial.

The CC documents therefore not only do not help to solve the present inner-party crisis. They do not even form the basis for fruitful discussion.

The old leadership talked about the 'Russian way', the new leadership talks about 'Chinese way'. The old leadership talked about 'revolutionary upsurge', the new leadership talks about 'civil war'. The old leadership drew parallels with Russia in the years of revolution, the new leadership draws parallels with China after 1927. Neither bothered to understand and analyse the situation in our own country.

Referring to a certain type of 'leader', Stalin, in his "Comments on the Current Affairs in China" said:

"They do not understand that the main task of leadership at the present time, when communist parties have already grown up and become mass parties, consists in finding out, mastering and skilfully combining the national peculiarities of the movement in each country, with the general principles of the Comintern in order to further and carry out in practice the basic objective of the communist movement.

"From this follows the attempt to stereotype the leadership of all countries. From this follows the attempt to apply mechanically certain general formulas, regardless of the concrete conditions of the revolutionary movement in each country. From this follows the endless conflict between formulas and the revolutionary movement in each country, which is the essential outcome of the leadership of these unfortunate leaders."

"*Concrete conditions of the revolutionary movement*" in our country this is precisely what was ignored by the old PB.

Demagogy, exaggeration and even blatant lies took the place of analysis. Inevitably what followed was a line of self-satisfied sectarianism and blind adventurism. Same is being done again. This, in brief, is our criticism of the present line of the CC—a criticism which we have tried to elaborate in the following pages.

Today, led by the USSR and the great Stalin, the democratic camp is scoring new victories everywhere. The mighty movement for peace gathers momentum every day.

As a result of this development, the desperation of the imperialist war-mongers has grown and today not merely war of aggression is raging on Korean soil but the menace of a world war has grown as at no period during the last five years. In such a period, our party remains in a state of paralysis, is unable to unify the people and even its own ranks. There could be no greater shame than this, no worse betrayal of our people and of the world democratic movement.

It is the task of each one of us to strain every nerve to end the present crisis in our party and this note we are placing before the CC and the ranks to point out where, in our opinion, the root of the crisis lies.

It can be seen that the note is mainly critical. It is not a political thesis. We have not tried to work out a new tactical line, we have only indicated broadly what the basis of such a line should be.

We have not made any specific proposal about the inquiry regarding the penetration of Tito agents into the party because the CC has already appointed a commission. The questionnaire prepared by the CC, however, seems to indicate that the proposed inquiry will be of a formal nature. We want to stress the need for a real searching inquiry and the careful checking up of the record of all comrades—especially those in leading committees and in the tech. apparatus of the party. While we have no direct evidence, we think it inconceivable that all the disastrous policies of the last two and a half years could be just due to 'mistakes'. It could not be that the imperialists, while planting their agents in every

party, paid no attention to India, which occupies such a vital position in present-day world.

### **A Note On The Present Situation In Our Party**

Events of the last three years have completely exposed the real nature of the independence that India won as the result of the compromise between British imperialism and the National Congress. Both in its foreign and in its national policies, the Nehru government has pursued the path of open subservience to the Anglo-American imperialists and the reactionary vested interest. It has become increasingly clear to all progressive elements, to millions and millions of our countrymen, that the so-called freedom has changed nothing, that conditions have worsened and are worsening every day, that the Congress has violated every pledge that it gave to the people.

Famine stalks the land. Starvation deaths are being reported from every part of the country. Rations have been cut in several provinces to a level less than half of what is considered absolutely essential to keep a man in normal health. Prices have reached a height which makes it impossible for the common man to satisfy even his most elementary needs. Unemployment is growing fast all over the country. The procurement plans of the government and its bogus zamindari abolition measures have imposed fresh burdens on the peasantry. The government's 'land reforms' which leave feudalism intact and even reinforce it, its shameful deal with the princes in the name of merger and integration, its outrageous concessions to the capitalists on the plea of stimulating production, its bartering away of India's sovereignty in various deals with foreign monopoly interests, its support to Anglo-American imperialists on all major issues before the UNO and especially on the issue of Korea, its refusal to form linguistic provinces, its resort to lathicharges, bullets and imprisonment without trial—all these are fast destroying illusions about its 'national' and 'progressive' character and ranging increasing sections of people against it. The utter fiasco of the independence day celebrations this year—15 August—the poor gathering at meetings, the bitter comments made even in bourgeois papers

who described these three years as years of broken pledges, of popular disillusionment and frustration, show the extent to which the isolation of the government has reached.

Out of these intolerable conditions and in the background of the growing disillusionment of the people has grown mass opposition to the present government and its policies. Innumerable strikes in all industrial centres, many of them fought with dogged determination for weeks together, strikes of teachers, clerks, employees of banks and commercial firms, peasant marches, peasant struggles rising to the level of uprising in Telangana, big student demonstrations many of which developed into militant clashes with the police, food riots, disintegration inside the Congress resulting in the formation of rival organisations in UP and several other places, defeats suffered by the Congress in the Calcutta by-election and the by-election in Bombay province and recently in Cochin-Travancore—such are some indications of this process. International developments, the growing might of the Soviet Union and the successful building of a new life in the people's democracies, the heroic struggle of the people of Vietnam and above all, the great victories of the Chinese people—are exercising profound influence on our people and helping the process of mass radicalisation. With their own eyes they see that while war-shattered China is, under the people's democratic government, stamping out the blackmarket and restoring its economy, while North Korea, in an incredibly short time, built anew its economy and acquired the strength which has amazed the whole world, India, which did not suffer even a fraction of the damage suffered by these countries in the war, is unable to restore even its pre-war production and is in the throes of crisis, unemployment and mass starvation. The contrast between the two worlds, between the two systems, standing out sharper and clearer every day, is a tremendous revolutionising factor in our present situation.

The fast deepening agrarian crisis, further accentuated by the measures and policies of the government, have led to the numerous peasant actions all over the country.

Despite the hold of Gandhian traditions and despite the still considerable influence of the Congress among them, especially among the rich and middle peasants, the peasants are rapidly realising that they have been betrayed by the present government and are moving into action against the landlords, moneylenders and the police. This struggle, reaching the level of uprising in Telangana and various forms of armed struggle in Andhra and Hajang areas (East Pakistan), opens up new prospects before the Indian revolutionary movement and indicates the path along which it has to develop.

Telangana brings out in bold relief that our revolution is a people's democratic revolution in a colonial country, that its aim is the destruction of the imperialist-feudal regime and the establishment of a people's democratic state, that it can be led only by the working class and its party, and that the revolution must develop along the path of *protracted armed struggle*, combined with the democratic reforms in agrarian relation brought about by the action of the peasant masses. And the very fact that Telangana has withstood all the attacks made by the government, which has concentrated enormous forces to crush it, shows beyond all doubt the tremendous vitality of the movement, its immense potentialities and striking power if spread over in more and more areas and combined with actions of other classes, especially the working class.

### **Weakness of the Popular Movement**

Despite all this it must be recognised that one of the characteristic features of the present situation in India is that *the growth of the mass movement has not kept pace with the growth of discontent with and opposition to the government and its policies*. The movement bears an extremely unorganised and uneven character. While armed struggle is being waged in Telangana, and armed struggle is being developed in Andhra and in the Hajang areas of East Pakistan, in the greater part of the country there are practically no peasant unions and there is no peasant movement, even of the most elementary type. Same is the truth about the strike movement, about the student



movement, about the people's movement in general. Very few big political strikes have taken place during the last two years. Even as regards mass economic strikes, the socialist-led strike of 2,40,000 textile workers of Bombay is the first of its type in a big industrial centre.

Despite the tremendous discontent against the Nehru government's foreign policy and the ever-growing menace of war, the peace movement remains a movement confined mainly to the following of the Communist Party and the mass organisations led by it, less than 3,00,000 signatures have been collected to the Stockholm appeal and American films showing the bombardment of Korean cities and villages are being screened with impunity everywhere. The tremendous possibilities created by the international and national events of the last two years for developing a powerful country-wide mass movement against the government have not materialised. The mass movement, taking the country as a whole, remains at a low level.

India described by Stalin in 1924, as one of the weakest links in the chain of imperialism, remains under imperialist rule, while the chain is being broken in adjoining countries.

This weakness of the popular movement is due *primarily to the disunity that prevails in the ranks of the popular forces*. While the spontaneous unity forged in many actions—the Gwalior student demonstration and the present mass strike in Bombay are two recent examples—has shown the mass urge for unity and the great possibility for such unity, the firm political and organisational links that alone could have put the unity movement on solid basis have not been forged. The movement for linguistic provinces, which drew in large masses of Congressmen, the agrarian struggles for land reform, against evictions, and against the government's procurement policies, the strike movements of workers and students—all have remained on *parallel rails* and have not been converged into one single mighty torrent, into a common movement for freedom and democracy. Due to this, not merely the popular movement as a whole has not developed to the pitch to which it could have been developed, but the movement of each class and section has remained weak.

The strength of the present government lies not merely in the influence of the Congress, which though still considerable is rapidly weakening but, above all, in the *disunity of the forces opposed to it*. There is no unity among Left parties, there is hardly any contact between the Left parties on the one hand and the progressive forces that are breaking away from the Congress on the other, dissensions reign in the ranks of the students (the AISF had a membership of only 80,000 while participants in student actions numbered two million according to AISF report. We do not know the present membership figures); mass kisan sabhas, uniting the peasant masses, exist in very few places. Worst of all, the working class itself is split (apart from the INTUC) in three all-India organisations and in rival trade unions in practically every trade-union centre. Disunity, brought about not merely by direct government agencies like the INTUC but also and increasingly by the disruptive tactics of the Socialist Party, is the basic reason for the present state of our national liberation movement—its uneven character, its narrow sweep, its low level, taking the country as a whole. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that without overcoming this disunity, without forging the unity of the fighting masses—not a passive formal unity, but unity for struggle, unity for action—it will be impossible for the people to march forward and overthrow their hated enemies.

Such a unity could be built only by the working class and under the leadership of the Communist Party. And the basic failure of the party has been the failure to build this unity, despite the tremendously favourable national and international situation, and develop, under workingclass leadership, a powerful united mass movement for the overthrow of the present imperialist-feudal order. The party has failed to give form and direction to the growing mass discontent against the government; it has failed to unify the numerous anti-government struggles into one single broad stream; it has failed to build up mass organisations by correct leadership of the masses; above all, it has failed to itself grow into a mass party by fulfilling these tasks. Thanks to these failures, the swing away from the Congress has not meant a

swing towards the party: on the contrary, it is other parties, especially the Socialist Party and Congress factions, that have utilised the mass discontent for strengthening their own position. It will be possible for us to rectify the mistakes of the last two and a half years only if this *basic failure* is recognised, the full extent of damage done by it is assessed and the root causes are laid bare.

It is recognised by all today that whereas reformism and subservience to the bourgeoisie characterised our slogans and policies in the earlier period and caused the havoc described in the "Report on Reformism" adopted by the second party congress, the party, since that congress and especially since December 1948, swung to the other extreme and pursued Left-sectarian and adventurist policies which not merely prevented us from building a broad mass movement against the government and leading it, but isolated us even from our own class, the working class, smashed up our movement and our mass organisations in most provinces, and weakened and disrupted the party itself to an extent unprecedented in our history.

The attempt made by the old PB to make out that everything was going on well, that the party was on the way to become the leader of the masses, that the party itself, instead of getting weaker and weaker, was becoming more and more 'stepped' and 'bolshvised' stands revealed today as a dishonest attempt, as a foul deception, as a piece of deliberate cheating of the loyal and trusting ranks by the leadership.

### **The Crisis in Our Party**

How serious the damage caused by the Left-sectarian and adventurist policies of the last two and a half years has been, it is difficult to assess fully in the absence of an authoritative report issued by the party centre. Certain facts however, which are known to all, give a rough idea.

Party membership has fallen from nearly a hundred thousand to barely 20,000. The damage has been the most serious in the industrial cities and areas where the main strength of the party lay. In Tamil Nadu (in Madras province), formerly our strongest proletarian base, the party membership is estimated to have gone

down from 5000 to 200. In Bombay, the GKU (textile workers' union) is today controlled and run by workers who have gone out of the party. In Cawnpore, Sholapur, Ahmedabad, Delhi, Dhulia, Amalner—in fact, in all workingclass centres, the bulk of party members have either gone out of the party or are inactive.

The trade unions led by the party are in a state of complete paralysis and stagnation. The real membership of the AITUC today is no more than a hundred thousand (though it is officially shown as what it was two years ago, viz. eight hundred thousand). Trade-union membership in Cawnpore, formerly our stronghold, stands today at 200. The BB&CI Union membership has fallen from 12,000 to 3000. On the railways, where we were the strongest force two years ago, we have hardly any mass union today and are unable to move the workers into action. Today 2,40,000 textile workers of Bombay are on strike and their strike is being led by the Socialist Party—a fact which strikingly reveals the state to which the party has been reduced in the working class. (It must be remembered that ever since 1928, the party has been the undisputed leader of the workers in Bombay and each and every major strike of the textile workers in Bombay was led by the party.)

The mass peasant unions which the party led have been practically wiped out, except in certain small areas in Bihar, Bengal and UP. Except in Telangana, where the peasant movement has reached the level of uprising, the party is not today leading a broad peasant movement anywhere.

(About the form and nature of armed struggle in Andhra and Hajang areas—East Pakistan—we have not yet received any information.)

No real mass papers are being conducted by the party today. The Marathi *Mashal* has a circulation of only 3,000 while the textile workers alone in this city number 2,50,000. The state of paralysis and disintegration of the party can be seen in the columns of our papers in the absence of factual reports and news from provinces. The closing down of the *Indo-Soviet Journal*, the poor number of the *Soviet Bhoomi* sold here, the absence of mass literature produced by us on current national and international issues, despite the tremendous demand for such

literature, are indications of the state of the party, of our isolation from the people.

Despite the general and widespread sympathy for the Korean people in their struggle for liberation, and despite the general hatred against the American imperialists and opposition to the India government's policy on the issue of Korea, we have not been able to run a mass campaign or organise even one big demonstration anywhere in India.

The character and scope of our peace movement can be seen from the fact that the all-national target for the collection of signatures is only five million and even of this figure, less than 3,00,000 have actually been collected. The letter sent by the WFDY to the Students' Federation shows how even on this vital issue we are lagging far behind every other country.

Today, with the food crisis reaching alarming proportions and starvation deaths being reported from all provinces, it is the socialists who are organising hunger marches in various parts, the party and organisations led by us being hardly in the picture.

Every party document meant for inner-party circulation, falls in the hands of the police—the "CC Letter" was quoted by government ministers and extracts from it given long before most comrades saw it. This, together with the repeated exposure of underground centres in many provinces, shows the extent to which police agents have penetrated the party.

Such is the condition to which the party has been reduced.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the fate of our national movement for freedom and democracy depends today on how rapidly the party is able to correct its mistakes, reforge its links with the masses and lead them forward. The open drive of the imperialists towards war, the desperation caused among them by the fiasco of their policies, their plans to use India as their war base, give added importance and urgency to the tasks that the party in India has to fulfil in order to discharge its duties and responsibilities towards the Indian people and the people of the whole world.

It is in this context that the developments in our party since the publication of the article "Mighty Advance of the National-Liberation Movement in Colonial and Dependent Countries"

(27 January, 1950) in the Cominform journal have to be studied and understood.

The article unleashed a veritable storm inside the party. The old party leadership, which had pursued Left-sectarian and adventurist policies for over two years and established a terror regime inside the party, disbanding committees, suspending and expelling comrades who dared to criticise it on any issue, came in for sharp criticism from the comrades in all provinces. The leadership first tried to minimise the mistakes and crimes it had committed and afterwards, when that proved impossible, admitted its mistakes only formally, in order to retain its position and win back the confidence of the party ranks which it had abused for full two years and brought the party to the verge of disaster.

So completely discredited it had been, however, so heinous its crimes, including suppression of international documents, that the CC had to be reconstituted and the main authors of the Left-sectarian policy and Titoite organisational methods removed from the CC.

All these have however not solved the inner-party crisis which remains as deep as ever and is deepening every day. Torn by dissension, threatened with splits, the party stands paralysed at a time when the mass hatred against the government has reached a higher level than ever before, a mighty strike wave is rising and militant clashes in Gwalior, Indore and other centres indicate a period of stormy battles ahead.

The question that inevitably arises is: Why is it that the inner-party crisis has not yet been resolved, why is it that for full eight months after the publication of the Cominform editorial, the party has been unable to unify the ranks and arrive at a clear understanding of the nature of the mistakes committed and the way to correct them? Why is it that the inner-party controversy rages as fiercely as it did eight months ago, paralysing all our mass work and reducing us to a state of utter passivity and impotence?

The reason is that in the opinion of many comrades all over the country, the new central committee has failed to understand the meaning of the Cominform article, failed to understand the

significance of the *immediate and special tasks* placed before our party in that article, failed to understand the real nature of the mistakes committed by the party during the last two and a half years and is therefore, in practice, pursuing the same policies of Left-sectarianism and adventurism that worked havoc. Further, that the organisational measures taken by the CC—the ‘reconstitution’ of the CC with the inclusion of only those who ‘unreservedly accept’ the interpretation of the Cominform article given in the “CC Letter”, the formation of provincial organising committees on the same basis, the decision to call a plenum only of the ‘reconstituted’ CC members and of comrades elected by these very organising committees—will only intensify the crisis in the party, intensify discussions and differences, prevent the hammering out of a correct line and the evolving of a leadership enjoying the confidence of the ranks and able to unify and lead them. The differences are therefore basically political though they are inevitably linked with organisational issues as well.

Before dealing with these differences, it is necessary to state the main points on which there is agreement in party ranks. All comrades today agree:

(1) That our revolution is a people’s democratic revolution, with agrarian revolution as its axis, with its tasks basically of a national-liberationist character and with imperialism and its collaborators—feudalism and the big bourgeoisie—as the enemy.

(2) That this revolution has to be led by the working class and its party, which has to form a broad united front of all anti-imperialist classes, including the national bourgeoisie and with working class-peasant unity as its main base.

(3) That the revolution will develop along the path of China, along the path of protracted armed struggle, leading to the formation of liberated areas and the creation of a powerful people’s liberation army to smash imperialist rule and progressively liberate the whole country.

Despite unanimity on these basic and vital points, there is no unanimity however on the *immediate tactical line* that the party has to pursue, on what the *immediate tasks* of the party are and how they are to be carried out. The documents issued by the

CC—(1) “The CC Letter to the Ranks” (1 June); (2) “The Report on Left Deviation Inside the CPI”; and (3) “Organisational Report of the CC”<sup>\*</sup>—give the CC’s understanding of the Cominform article, its estimation of the present situation in the country, its understanding of the mistakes committed by the party in the last two years and its tactics and slogans for the present period. With all these, we are in basic disagreement and we are firmly of the opinion that the new line will not only not help to take the party forward, but will further weaken it and smash it up completely. We shall, in this note, attempt to indicate our differences with the present CC in broad outline. For this, we shall base ourselves primarily on the three CC documents mentioned above.

The Cominform editorial of 27 January has formulated the situation in India and the tasks of the Indian communists.

We hold that the formulations made here are clear-cut and specific. And that, if the CC had read the lines carefully and not tried to read *between* the lines as it has done, the inner-party crisis would have been resolved long ago and the party set on correct rails.

### **Sectarianism Persists**

While the old PB read in the editorial a complete justification of its Left-sectarian policies and ignored the tasks placed before us—the strengthening of the alliance between workers and all peasants, the fighting for agrarian reform and the building of a broad united front of all anti-imperialist classes, parties and sections—the new CC reads in it a complete vindication of the Andhra document of 1948, with its main formulation about civil war and its main emphasis on armed struggle, and ignores the very tasks which the old PB also ignored. It argues that armed struggle in the form of guerilla war will *itself be the main weapon* in the present stage in every part of the country to build worker-peasant unity, to build the democratic unity of the people and to build a mass communist party, for establishing proletarian hegemony. Although we fully recognise the immense service to the party rendered by the Andhra comrades, who were the first to point out the basic mistakes of the political thesis adopted by

<sup>\*</sup> See documents III, IV and V of 1950



the second party congress and who developed and led the Telangana battle against overwhelming odds, we do not agree with their interpretation of the Cominform article, with their estimation of the present situation in India and with the tactical line proposed by them and accepted by the CC.

The first question is: Who are the allies and who are the enemies of the proletariat in the people's democratic revolution ?

The "CC Letter" says: "In building the united national front, several points have to be kept in mind, viz. the basis of the front is the alliance of the workers and the *toiling* peasantry, under the leadership of the working class" (emphasis added).

It should be noted that the Cominform article stresses the task of strengthening the alliance with "*all* the peasantry". Further, Mao in his article on "Dictatorship of People's Democracy" speaks of the "Dictatorship of people's democracy headed by the working class and *based on the alliance of workers and peasants.*" In the same article, Mao says: "...chiefly the alliance of the working class *with the peasantry* for it constitutes 80 to 90 per cent of the Chinese population, constitutes the *basis* of the dictatorship of people's democracy".

It is known to all that the old PB's sectarian understanding on the agrarian issues led it to narrow down the base of the people's democratic front and caused immense harm to the peasant movement. It appears to us that the new CC is also doing the same, though in a modified form.

Again, the "CC Letter" treats all rich peasants who carry on *any* feudal exploitation as 'enemies of the front'. In practice, this would lead not only to the exclusion of almost *all* rich peasants because practically all of them carry on *some* feudal exploitation (renting out part of their land, etc.) but also to placing of many middle peasants in the category of rich peasants. The specific warning given by the Chinese leaders on this issue, the distinction made by them between those who engage in 'slight feudal exploitation' and those who derive more than 25 per cent of their income from such exploitation is forgotten by the CC and all who engage in *any* feudal exploitation are placed, without exception, in the category of *enemies*.

The same tendency is revealed in treating the question of alliance with the middle bourgeoisie. The CC states that "there are some sections (of the middle bourgeoisie) who though not big by themselves, yet are intimately connected with feudal or bourgeois interests and hence are enemies of the revolution".

It goes without saying that the mere small size of one's capital does not make one progressive. But the *criterion* which the CC has laid down for consideration of a section as progressive is, in our opinion, wrong. The CC would consider all those sections "which have *direct link with big bourgeoisie* or interests bound with feudal exploitation" as counter-revolutionary. This would automatically exclude a vast number of middle bourgeoisie from the united front for they have "direct link" with the big bourgeoisie. It should be noted that Mao has specifically stated that those who have "no connection or comparatively fewer connections with *imperialism* are the real national bourgeoisie". Nowhere have we read Mao or any Chinese leader making connection with the *big bourgeoisie* as the criterion for deciding the counter-revolutionary character of petty and middle bourgeoisie.

The big bourgeoisie is undoubtedly an enemy. Those who have links with them will vacillate, will waver and very often take *reactionary* stand. All this is true. But to go further and treat as enemy all those who have direct link with the big bourgeoisie would mean forgetting the national-liberationist nature of our struggle, forgetting its anti-imperialist and anti-feudal tasks and *extending the sphere of our enemies*.

Sectarianism, even on the question of class alliances, continues, though in a modified form.

Sectarianism and adventurism continue in the *tactical* line also.

The "Report on Left-Sectarian Deviation" confines itself mainly to a *theoretical and ideological* criticism of the basic documents issued by the old PB. The tactical mistakes—practical, concrete mistakes—are either not mentioned or glossed over. This inadequate self-criticism has led to totally inadequate correction. Mistakes cannot be corrected unless they are frankly recognised.

Everyone knows that it is not enough to understand the *stage of our revolution*. It is also necessary to understand the *stage of our movement*, its actual level, in order to know what concrete tasks face it. To forget this is to forget everything that the teachers of Marxism taught us about tactics.

One of the basic causes of the mistakes of the old PB lay in its refusal to take into account the concrete conditions of the revolutionary movement in our own country—a task absolutely imperative for a serious revolutionary party—for working out the tactical line. It refused to make a concrete analysis of the political situation, of the correlation of class forces, of the stage of mass consciousness, of our own strength and influence vis-à-vis the reactionary and reformist forces. It was guilty of *gross subjectivism*, of substituting wish for fact, of *overestimation and exaggeration* of the degree of radicalisation of the masses, of the extent of isolation of reformist. From the indisputable and visible fact that the mass of people were getting disillusioned with the Congress, it drew the conclusion that the disillusionment was already *complete* and the masses were merely waiting for 'a bold lead' from the party to advance for the forcible overthrow of the government. Its whole 'tactical line', based on this ridiculous and false understanding, became one of issuing 'calls for action' and initiation of militant action by the vanguard, mainly party cadres and supporters, to move the masses into action.

On the one hand, we overestimated the maturity of the situation and the degree of revolutionisation of the masses and indulged in adventurist action with the aim of 'setting an example' before the people. On the other, we *underestimated* the fighting capacity of the masses, of the possibility of moving them into action for their own concrete demands and of building the unity of the people through such action. We overestimated the strength of the enemy, of the extent of 'white terror' in the country as a whole, underestimated the volume of democratic opinion in the country and in practice adopted the defeatist 'theory' of the inevitability of fascism, of the impossibility of winning day-to-day demands in face of 'white terror' and in the midst of the

economic crisis. The result was that on the one hand, we issued extreme radical slogans and engaged in frontal clashes with the police in the hope of galvanising the masses; on the other, we followed a line of opportunist passivity in relation to the concrete issues facing the people—peace, civil liberties, housing, refugee rehabilitation, high prices, exorbitant government demands on the peasantry in the name of zamindari abolition and procurement, evictions, real wage-cut, etc. More and more the basic outlook and even our agitational line became: ‘Nothing can be won till the present government is overthrown and a people’s democratic government established.’ This apparently ‘revolutionary’ outlook led in practice to the failure to work out a *mass policy*, a policy of developing a *mass movement* and building *mass organisation*.

Totally ignoring the fact that the strength of the government lay in the disunity of the forces opposed to it, in the disunity of the popular forces, we failed to work out tactics and slogans to achieve popular unity on concrete immediate issues. We allowed the socialists and reformists to disrupt the AITUC and the AIRF, seeing in the disruption, not a weakening, but a strengthening, of the working class movement. We transformed our students’ federation into narrow sect of communist students, our peace movement into a movement of our own following. We liquidated our kisan sabhas, instead of building kisan unity. Instead of winning over lakhs and lakhs of Congressmen who were getting disillusioned with the Congress but were not yet prepared to leave it, we made the atrocious formulation from the students’ federation platform that ‘all Congressmen are party’ to the counter-revolutionary policies and methods of the government (Students’ Federation Report, *Communist* No. 5). We denounced the Workers’ and Peasants’ Party, the most progressive Left party in the country, as an agency of the bourgeoisie. We denounced every Left party in the same terms and refused to differentiate between the Socialist Party leadership and the honest ranks. We ran our newspapers as mere bulletins of our activities, more and more of jail clashes only, for that had become our main ‘front’, written in heavy unreadable language, paying no heed to the actual happenings in the country, the concrete issues facing the

people, and failed to conduct a live and real exposure campaign against the government. In a period of tremendous mass radicalisation and growing thirst for political literature, we failed to issue streams of pamphlets on live international and national issues.

Instead of breaking through the self-imposed isolation that these policies and methods brought about, we glorified in that isolation and looked upon ourselves as 'irreconcilable revolutionaries' fighting against one and all.

*About all this, the new CC has to say nothing* in its 100-page "Report on Left Deviation". It declares that the old PB "developed a full-fledged trotskyite thesis" and pursued "Left-sectarian policies and adventurist methods" but does not go beyond this abstract statement: does not concretise the manifestations of Left-sectarianism and trotskyism, does not stress that the line was a disruptive line, not merely in its theoretical formulations, but also in its actual working out. Trotskyism is treated as an abstract theoretical entity and nothing more, not as an agency of imperialism, which destroys people's unity, destroys working class unity and decimates the vanguard in isolation. This failure of the new CC to concretely analyse our past mistakes has left its mark on the new line also, as we shall try to show.

### **Old Formulations and New Formulations**

A correct analysis of the situation must be the starting point for a correct tactical line.

The method adopted by the old PB for analysing the concrete situation in the country was one of making bold assertions, based on wishful thinking and not on facts.

Thus it stated that "the strength of the working class led by the party and the AITUC is *far greater* than that of the capitalists and the capitalist Congress government." Further, that the Congress and the reformists are "thoroughly isolated as enemies of the toiling people and friends of capitalists" ("Trade-union Fraction Report", June 1949: emphasis added).

This was written at a time when even in the working class, the party and the AITUC were fast losing ground to the socialists

and shortly before we lost the seats in the Bombay corporation from predominantly working class areas which we had held till then.

Therefore “the situation is thus ripe for an all-India assault on the capitalists and their government”.

How does the *new* CC analyse the situation? How does its methods contrast with that of the old PB? The following extracts from the “CC Letter” will show that:

“The Congress government is *thoroughly exposed before the entire people* as the tool of bloodsuckers, before its own followers.”

And “the situation is ripe for the *smashing of the ruling class by armed action* of the people” (emphasis added).

Not merely the methods of analysis, but even the very words used are strikingly similar. The only ‘difference’ is that while the old PB thought the situation was “ripe (in June 1949) for an all-India assault” on the government the new PB thinks that the situation is “ripe for the *smashing of the ruling class* by armed action of the people”.

Such is the ‘difference’ between the understanding of the old PB and the new CC about the situation in our country.

How then does the new CC criticise the concrete practical mistakes of the old PB? The “Report on Left-Deviation in the CPI” makes that clear.

The ‘criticism’ is not that the old PB was guilty of *overestimation* in analysing the situation, but was guilty of *underestimation*, it merely saw the ‘upsurge’ and did not see that the upsurge had already reached the level of *civil war*, i.e. open armed battle between the government and the people. It merely thought that the situation was “ripe for an all-India assault” and did not realise that the situation was “ripe for the smashing of the ruling class by armed action”.

The report also lays down the ‘test’ for deciding who is a revolutionary and who is a reformist. “Anyone who refuses to see the truth...that there is actually a civil war on...cannot claim a grain of revolutionary outlook in him.” No wonder, the CC is busy ‘re-organising’ the committees by including only those who

have this 'revolutionary outlook'. It must be remembered that the ex-general secretary, B.T.Ranadive, also denounced everyone who did not agree with his analysis as 'reformist', disbanded committees and 'reorganised' them with 'revolutionists' of his choice.

From the overall assessment of the political situation in India, the new CC comes to the conclusion that since civil war is 'actually on' and since 'revolution has already begun', therefore, "guerilla warfare in the set circumstances of today has become the main and *basic form* of struggle before the Indian revolutionary movement *as a whole*" (emphasis in original).

And the "CC Letter" states that the situation is ripe in the country as a whole, 'baring a few areas', for waging such armed struggle. The basic criticism made against the old PB is that it forgot the civil war, that it indulged in frontal clashes with the enemy and pinned its faith in general strike, instead of developing guerilla war in the countryside. In this and almost in this *alone*, the concrete mistake of the old PB is seen. This is how the Cominform article is also 'interpreted'.

We are of the opinion that the CC has not understood the meaning of the term 'civil war'. Civil war is a characteristic feature of the revolutionary movement when *armed forces* of the people face *armed force* of the government, when the battle between these two *armed forces dominates the national political situation*. If the mere fact that the big bourgeoisie with the political following enters political scene as a counter-revolutionary force and is opposed by the masses under the Communist Party—if this mere fact were enough to constitute 'civil war' then countries like France and Italy would be today in the throes of a civil war, then the period in Germany after the advent of Hitler to power would have been a period of civil war. Even the facts about Telangana and Andhra, given by the CC itself, do not in the least warrant the formulation that India is in the midst of a civil war. We have not seen such a formulation in any international document on India. They have described the present stage as the '*agrarian stage* of the national-liberation struggle' which certainly is a much lower stage than the stage of civil war.

Not merely civil war is on. It *started* in June 1947, with the Mountbatten award. And now it has reached the stage when the situation is "ripe for the smashing of the ruling class by armed action". Unless you believe in this fantasy, you are not a revolutionist! A strange kind of civil war it is, whose existence has not been noticed by even our party members, but has to be 'discovered' by the CC and made acceptable to the ranks by such a threat!

Focusing its attention on China, and drawing false historical parallels, the CC believes that since the betrayal by the Kuomintang and the split in the united front in 1927 marked the beginning of civil war there, *therefore* the betrayal by the Congress and the split in the united national front must be the beginning of civil war in India.

The CC forgets the 'little' fact that the split in China meant also a split in the *armed forces*, that 30,000 soldiers under Chu Teh joined the revolutionaries and that the entire period since then has been dominated by the armed struggle between the Kuomintang and the People's Liberation Army (earlier the Chinese Red Army). Not merely is this a false and exaggerated picture of the reality, but also in its entire understanding, the CC as all its documents show, lives in an unreal atmosphere, draws mechanical parallels and refuses to study concretely in Indian situation and the Indian developments. It transforms the rich and varied experience of the great Chinese revolution into a set of rigid lifeless formulas, instead of making use of that experience to solve the complex tasks of our own national movement and leading it to victory.

### **Role of Working Class Minimised**

This ignoring of concrete realities and this tendency to draw mechanical parallels are sharply revealed in the formulations of the CC about our tasks on the working class front, in the role that it assigns to the working class in the 'civil war'.

Proletarian leadership, as every Marxist knows, as an essential condition not merely for the *final* victory over imperialism, but for building a firm fighting unity of the anti-imperialist masses and raising the movement to the level of an uprising. The specific



manner in which this leadership is realised, the specific weapon which the proletariat wields however cannot be identical for all countries, but has to vary from country to country, depending on the concrete situation in the country, the nature of its economy and the place of the proletariat in that economy. One of the biggest mistakes of the old PB was its dogmatic understanding about the way in which proletarian leadership is to be realised, an understanding which led to the perspective of political general strike and uprising in cities, followed by armed struggle in the countryside.

In correcting the mistakes of the old PB however the new CC steps into another error, draws mechanical parallel between India and other colonial countries and minimises the importance of the workingclass as a workingclass. As a result of this, not merely the concrete lessons of the mass movement in India are forgotten, but workingclass leadership itself is practically liquidated.

It should be noted here that although it is in the working-class that the party has received the most serious setback in its entire history, and although it is the re-establishment of our leadership in the workingclass that constitutes one of the key tasks before the party, this long hundred-page report says nothing about the actual mistakes that led to this havoc or the actual steps that are to be taken today to undo the harm and contents itself only with vague phrases about 'suitable forms of struggle' and 'correct tactics' on the plea that "it would be out of place to go into too many details about it". This very manner of dealing with the question throws revealing light on the outlook of the CC and the importance it attaches to the workingclass and our tasks in relation to it.

In his well-known speech before the University of the Toilers of the East, Stalin placed India, as distinct from countries like Morocco, China and Egypt, in the category of colonies "which are capitalistically more or less developed and which possess a more or less numerous national proletariat", and stated that "it is a question of preparing the proletariat of such colonies as India for the role of the leader in the national-liberation movement". The history of our national movement shows the tremendous role that *mass actions by the working class* can and

must play in realisation of this leadership. For this, one need to refer only to the events in India in 1945-46, when the mass movement reached the level of armed struggle for power.

Today, on the plea of white terror in cities and in the name of 'China path', the CC wants to forget these concrete lessons of our own history and minimise the importance of one of the most powerful weapons forged by our anti-imperialist movement during the last 30 years.

While recognising the possibility of strikes "where conditions of white terror have not yet reached extreme proportions", it robs the workingclass actions in the present period of their revolutionary content and assigns to the workingclass primarily and mainly the tasks of "*accumulation of its strength and secretly lending every conceivable support* to the armed struggle in the countryside". Imagining that the country is already in the midst of a civil war, exaggerating the extent of white terror in the cities, minimising the fighting capacity of the masses and the possibility of moving them into action, the CC talks about "enemy-controlled cities and areas" and formulates a line which in practice reduces the workingclass to a state of utter passivity and hands it over to the socialist disruptors.

It says little in all its documents about protest actions, solidarity actions, political actions by the working class, which in the past played and must today also play a big part in the establishment of proletarian hegemony in the liberation movement, in galvanising the masses into action, in raising the whole movement to a higher level and giving it immense sweep and striking power.

The CC has not emphasised that workingclass unity has to be the *core of the united national front* and that this unity has to be built at all costs and by all means as one of our key tasks. It has ignored the lesson of China itself, where the tremendous consolidation of the workingclass under the banner of the party in the years 1925-27 and subsequently created the basis for the great victories. It has taken no steps to build workingclass unity and has ignored to this day the proposals sent by the UTUC for trade-union unity with the AITUC. As the "CC Letter" itself

shows, the only criterion in the formation of the new CC was to include those who had advocated armed struggle in the countryside. Finally, the resolutions adopted by the CC in its last meeting emphasise only the development of armed struggle in the countryside and either do not mention or give a minor place to the task of building the workingclass movement. The most glaring example is the resolution on Bombay and Maharashtra committees, which does not even refer to the fact that we stand isolated from the workingclass in the biggest industrial city in India and have to win back our position there.

All these are the result of total ignoring of the concrete condition in India, the immense importance of the working-class in our national politics and national economy, of the tendency to draw mechanical parallels. Besides the workingclass, the urban poor, the office employees, the teachers, the petty shopkeepers, the students—scattered in cities and towns all over the country—form extremely important sections of our people and have always played big role in the anti-imperialist struggle. With the big bourgeoisie having betrayed the struggle and their own conditions fast deteriorating, all these sections can be won over by the workingclass and led into battle. Finally, the CC has also not noted how in the past workingclass actions had a galvanising influence on the peasant masses themselves.

By stressing all this, we do not seek to deny the colonial nature of our economy nor do we deny the decisive role that agrarian struggles will play in the creation of partisan and liberated areas. What we want to stress here is that because of the comparatively greater industrial development of India, the development of a network of railways and roads, and because of the lessons taught by our own movement, the workingclass in India has to play a big role in the development of the national-liberation struggle, not merely as organiser of peasant struggle by the sending of activists to the countryside, but also through its own *mass actions*.

There is a tendency in the "Report on Left Deviation" to ascribe our failure to organise mass actions, especially of the workingclass, to bring about mass mobilisation, exclusively to

the repressive measures of the government and the prevalence of white terror. This is far from true. No one would deny that the party and the mass organisations led by it became the special targets of government attack and terror, especially in the southern provinces—Kerala, Andhra, Tamil Nadu—was intense and severe. Nobody would deny that the government has resorted to bullets and lathicharges to break up meetings and demonstrations in every part of the country.

But it must be remembered also that the same Bombay workingclass whom we failed to move despite our repeated strike calls during the last two years, had on the occasion of the RIN revolt faced a thousand times more intense terror and yet not wavered. And if it is argued that there were 'special factors' at that time, then the fact that today, despite all threats of the government, 2,40,000 textile workers of Bombay are on strike, are facing repression, are being supported by all sections of workers in the city—this fact shows conclusively that it was not terror alone that is responsible for our inability to build mass organisations and lead mass actions.

The great solidarity strike of five-lakh Bombay workers on 31 August 1950, the militant fight waged on that day, the heroic battle in which five workers laid down their lives and hundreds were injured, the great popular sympathy that the struggle has evoked—all these are facts which the CC should ponder over.

It was the *unity of the workingclass, unity of the workingclass with mass of people*, that made the glorious action at the time of RIN revolt possible. That very unity and the confidence it created, the burning hatred against foreign rule and the determination on the part of all sections of our people to destroy that rule transformed common men and women into heroes and enabled them to face machine guns and rifles. Today again it is the unity for struggle, unity of the workingclass behind the demand for bonus that has made the present great strike possible.

The utterly opportunist and defeatist 'theory' which seeks to explain every failure by reference to white terror has been blown up by hard facts.

The fact that we want to emphasise again is that the party, during the last two years and a half, ignored this very task, the task of *building the unity of the workingclass*, building the unity of the workingclass with the mass of our people, specially the peasantry. It ignored the lesson taught by the entire history of the international workingclass movement that unity does not come about by the process of spontaneous development as the result of economic crisis, but has to be built consciously. It ignored the axiom that unity is the main weapon in the struggle against a well-entrenched and powerful enemy. It ignored the task of winning over the masses following the socialists by patient work among them and argued instead that the socialists are *already* isolated. It ignored all work among Congressmen and Congress followers, numbering tens of millions, on the plea that 'all Congressmen' are reactionary. It ignored all work in reformist mass organisations on the plea that the party had already become stronger than the government. Due to all this, it got more and more isolated from the masses and failed to unite the anti-imperialist forces under its banner.

Instead of seeing all this, the CC wants us to believe that all our setbacks were due to 'white terror' and due to our failure to fight that terror by means of guerilla war. Like petty-bourgeois revolutionist, *it isolates the question of form of struggle from the concrete mass policies followed by the party*. It forgets that it is a total break with Marxism to do so.

### **Armed Struggle and the People**

The crassest manifestation of this petty-bourgeois revolutionism is seen in the section on "Armed Struggle" in the "Report on Left-Deviation", the section which forms the heart and the core of the whole document. Not merely is section, and also the whole document, full of contradictory formulations, but it makes assertions which would stagger anyone who has any knowledge of Indian realities.

It states at one place that the "ranks and the masses of Left parties", i.e. those who along with us have to form the core of the united front, show only "the *first signs* of radicalisation"

and yet asserts "that the situation is ripe for the smashing of the ruling class by armed action". The CC admits that the party has been very seriously weakened, that our position is very weak in the working class, that we have no kisan movement in the greater part of the country and yet it proceeds to say "that the objective conditions for starting guerilla war are there in *India as a whole* (emphasis added) leaving aside some areas" and that our immediate task in the rural areas is to put the movement "*on the rails of armed struggle*".

As everyone knows, if 'objective conditions' alone were enough, India would have been in the throes of armed struggle long long ago and would by now have achieved national liberation.

Our CC will of course argue that the people of our country 'have a working class party' and that its leadership is 'correct'. Hence the conditions are ripe for armed struggle "taking India as a whole, barring some areas". (Why these 'some' unfortunate areas are 'barred', the CC has not explained.)

But common sense, and above all the live experience of Telangana should have taught the CC that the mere *existence* of a communist party is not enough to constitute the subjective factor. It must be a party which is a real communist party, rooted in the masses, looked upon by them with love and respect, with firm links with them, a party which has already achieved a *minimum degree of political and organisational consolidation* of the people under its banner.

The CC admits that we have not got such a party today. But it asserts that "it is only by adopting armed guerilla warfare that the party will get strengthened and extended". The CC admits that the party has not been able to achieve even the minimum extent of unification of the masses and stands seriously weakened even in the working class. But it asserts that only through guerilla struggle, the party "will be able to unite the toiling masses and mobilise all anti-imperialist classes." The CC admits that even those masses that hate the present government "Still suffer from legalist and constitutionalist illusions and have not yet come to the path of armed struggle". But it asserts that "it is merely a

matter of time”—and not of their own experience as Lenin and Stalin taught—“before they take to the path of armed struggle if there is any force capable of boldly leading them”.

And of course the ‘force’ itself—the party—will get “strengthened and extended only by adopting armed guerilla warfare”.

What do all these statements and assertion boil down to? What do they mean?

They mean that according to the CC the main and almost exclusive weapon, “taking India as a whole”, for strengthening and extending the party, for uniting the toiling masses and mobilising the anti-imperialist classes, for destroying the constitutionalist and legalist illusions—in fact, for every task that faces the party and the movement is the weapon of guerilla struggle. This magic weapon will solve all the complex tasks facing the party, will reforge its links with the people, will enable it to become their leader. One is irresistibly reminded by these formulations of the similar formulations made by Ranadive that ‘bold lead’ and ‘militant action’ will expose reformists, will build workingclass unity, will bring about general strike and lead to uprising.

It will not be out of place here to draw the attention of the CC to a comment made by Lenin in his article “Anti-Militarist Tactics of Social-Democracy”, a comment to which we drew the attention of Ranadive also in a note sent to him in September 1949.

Criticising Herve, who tried to isolate the question of tactics from the actual situation, Lenin said:

“The anarchist method of reasoning is revealed here in full measure. The *blind faith in the miraculous power of every ‘action directive’*, the abstraction of this ‘direct action’ from the *general social and political situation, without analysing it in the least*, in a word, the arbitrary mechanical conception of social phenomenon is obvious” (emphasis added).

“Blind faith in the miraculous power of every direct action”—this is the outlook that dominates the “CC Letter”. It is the same outlook as that of the old PB.

This outlook also leads the CC to forget all distinction between perspective and a tactical line, between a perspective and a slogan of the day.

The CC in a number of documents has stressed that the “era of contempt for perspective”, must end. We entirely agree. But we want to remind the CC that a correct perspective alone is not enough and that perspective must not be confused with a immediate tactical line, with the slogan of the day. A correct perspective also can lead to grossly wrong tactics, if the distinction is obliterated. We would refer the CC to what Stalin said in this connection:

“The third tactical principle of Leninism”, said Stalin, in his “Comments on Current Affairs in China”, “concerns the question of change of slogans, and of the forms and methods of this change. It concerns the question of how to transform the slogans of the party into slogans for the masses, the question of how to bring the masses to revolutionary positions, so that the masses should become convinced through their own political experience of the correctness of the party's slogans.

“But propaganda and agitation alone cannot convince the masses. For this, the political experience of the masses themselves is necessary. For this, it is necessary that the broad masses should realise through their own experience, the inevitability of overthrowing the present system and establishing a new political and social order.

“It is good if the advanced group, the party, was already convinced of the necessity of overthrowing say, the provisional government of Milyukov and Kerensky in April 1917. But this was still inadequate for them to come forward for the overthrow of the government, in order to put forward the slogan of the overthrow of the provisional government and the establishment of Soviet power *as the slogan of the day*. In order to convert the formula ‘all power to the Soviets’ from a *perspective* of the immediate period into the *slogan of the day*, one more decisive condition was necessary, viz. that the masses themselves should be convinced of the correctness of these slogans and render the party some kind of support or other in carrying this out in practice.



“One must differentiate strictly between a formula as a *perspective* for the immediate future and formula as the *slogan of the day*.

Contrast these statements of Stalin with the formulation of the CC.

“They (the masses) want this fascist raj to end. Though they still suffer from *legalist and constitutionalist illusions*, it is merely a *matter of time* before they take to the path of armed struggle if there is a force capable of boldly leading them.”

Stalin speaks of “the political experience of the masses themselves”, the CC speaks of “time”. Stalin speaks of “propaganda and agitation” not being enough, the CC speaks of “bold lead” being enough.

With our CC, all distinction between perspective and immediate also vanishes—countrywide armed struggle is the perspective—armed struggle is also the immediate *slogan of action* for the country “as a whole”.

Due to the same outlook, the CC even when it correctly criticises the old leadership, fails to draw the *correct conclusions* and repeats the same old mistakes.

This criticism against the old PB can only mean that the new CC considers it wrong to have issued the slogan of railway strike without assessing the maturity of the situation, mass mood and the strength of the party. Yet, when it comes to itself, the new CC coolly tells us that “the objective conditions for starting guerilla warfare are there” not merely in “many areas” as the document “Main Features of the Present Situation” asserted, but “taking India as a whole, leaving aside some areas”. And what are these ‘objective conditions’? The CC’s attempts to narrate them are so ridiculous—‘Congress is worse than British raj’ is the common talk on everybody’s lips, etc.—that they can convince none who knows anything about the Indian situation. To confuse discontent with revolutionary indignation, to confuse the urge to *change* the government with the urge to *fight to overthrow* the government—this is precisely what the old PB did. With equal justification, it urged that workers cursed the government, the railway board and even the socialist leaders and from *that* it

concluded that the situation had become revolutionary—and insurrection was “round the corner”. The new CC does the same. This has nothing in common with the Marxist-Leninist method of analysing a concrete situation on the basis of the practical activity of the masses themselves.

Workers had ‘illusions’ about socialists on 9th March, discovers the new CC. What about the peasants today “taking India as a whole”? Have they not, in the greater part of country, still got illusions about the Congress, about factions that have split away from the Congress and developed new illusions about the socialists and about the Peasants’ and Workers’ Party? Have they not got illusions about the coming election and about the possibility of a peaceful change in the government? Does the CC imagine that the political consciousness of peasants stands at a higher level than that of workers?

The old PB “did not bother to take a stock of the decrepit state of party organisation” when giving the 9th March call. And yet, at that time, we were the strongest force among the railway workers with most of the real mass unions with us. What about the ‘state of party organisation’ today? The new CC, which condemns the old PB for giving a single call without taking into account the state of the party organisation, has yet the hardihood of working out a whole tactical line with guerilla war all over the country as its main plank, completely ignoring the fact that the party organisation today is a hundred times more disrupted and weaker than it was on 9th March. It argues that “it is only by adopting armed guerilla warfare that the party would be strengthened and extended”—a familiar echo of the formulations of the old PB which ascribed miraculous powers of militant action everywhere and for solving every political and organisational problem.

The CC ignores the uneven level of our movement, a characteristic feature to which attention was drawn by Balabushevich. It prescribes universal recipes and cut-and-dried formulas to suit every place. While, lest it be charged with adventurism, it talks in a general way about ‘setting our house in order’ and about ‘minimum preliminary preparations’, it qualifies even these half-hearted statements with other grossly adventurist

formulations and gives no inkling whatsoever as to how this 'setting of the house in order' is to be done. It treats all as 'organisational tasks' and not as serious *political* tasks—the task of building people's unity and developing a broad mass movement.

We have already seen the role that the CC assigns to the working class. As we all know one of the most characteristic features about petty-bourgeois revolutionism is the role that it assigns to the masses in general, the distinction that it makes between 'active heroes' and passively sympathetic masses.

The CC. with an air of profundity as though it has made a new discovery and enriched Marxism, informs us that "the old yardstick of measuring the readiness of masses for armed action by whether the overwhelming majority of masses themselves are physically coming out in the streets and have accepted the full programme of the party or not has to be discarded" and proceeds to say that the "*general support*" of the people is enough for waging guerilla struggle. What this 'general support' means, it has not cared to define, but the "CC Letter" makes it clear that it means nothing more than hatred against the government. (It may be noted that Ranadive also used to make formulations about 'old standard' and 'new standard')

The following statement made by the present general secretary in the CC meeting of May 1950 (which worked out the new line) shows clearly how our present leaders define 'objective factors':

"Congress government has no longer any sympathy, whoever takes action against it gets sympathy. That is the essential background. Question is, can we proceed with this sympathy for armed activity, or have we to wait for masses actually coming out in action? Methods and forms of struggle have to be considered in terms of situation. But without armed action, no progress is possible. Putting DF (democratic front), unity or support of the masses in the old way as a pre-condition for armed action is wrong" (from "CC Minutes").

We do not want to make any lengthy comment. The formulations speak for themselves. All we want to say is that this is precisely how the terrorists of the past used to argue. They too thought that this kind of "sympathy" is enough. Only

they were more *correct*, because in those days of direct British rule, *any and every action* against the government evoked sympathy.

No one has ever stated that masses must accept “the full political programme of the party” or that all of them can be active participants in *all forms* of struggle. The basic question is, whether the masses are to be *active participants* in the struggle against the government, active supporters (and not ‘general supporters’) of the guerillas where guerilla struggle is being waged, *makers* of their own history and not passively sympathetic spectators; whether conditions exist in India today for such active mass participation in the movement against the government and if so, through what concrete slogans and day-to-day work this movement is to be developed? Phrases about the ‘old Yardstick’ and the ‘new Yardstick’ evade these very questions. More, they betray a *profoundly defeatist outlook* about the possibility of moving the masses into action and that too in a period of tremendous mass awakening.

The most surprising thing about the passage quoted above is not merely that it ignores the general principles of Marxism about the relation between the vanguard and the masses, it ignores the *live experience* of Telangana itself.

Was it mere hatred against the government and the ‘*general support*’ of the masses that enabled us to develop guerilla war in Telangana? The following extract from a document issued by the Andhra provincial committee in February 1950, and circulated by the new CC itself answers the question.

After stating the different conditions between hilly areas where there are natural protections and plains where “we have to depend upon the people to give us protection”, the document proceeds to say:

“Even in plains, if roads and bridges are not there, it is difficult for the enemy to come repeatedly and often. Hence it is to the advantage of guerilla squads to sabotage roads and bridges. The more this is done, the better. In the razakar period, in Suryapet area, which is completely plain area, it is because our comrades dug up and destroyed the roads and bridges that guerilla war

could be continued. The road between Suryapet and Jangam, a length of 50 miles, was dug up and destroyed by thousands of people. *This will give an idea what type and size of people's co-operation is necessary for guerilla war.* (emphasis added) We must prepare the people for this. When we destroy the communications, precautions must be taken to see that no loss of life occurs for the innocent people."

Is it necessary to make any comment on this revealing passage? Is it necessary to show that the 'new yardstick' discovered by the CC has nothing to do with the experience of Telangana? Is it necessary to prove that the 'new line' which advocates armed struggle all over the country on the basis of 'general support' is not born out of the live experience of Telangana, but is a complete negation of that experience?

The new CC as taken from Telangana only *one thing*—armed struggle—and isolated it from the background in which it developed and *conditions that made it possible*—a mass peasant movement for land, the Andhra Mahasabha, uniting the kisan masses, and with a membership of over a lakh, a strongly entrenched party, conditions that were created by patient and sustained mass work, fight for concrete demands and forging the unity of the people through such fight.

The CC puts the cart before the horse and argues that armed struggle itself will create these conditions. To call this path the Telangana path is a distortion of facts, distortion of history, negation of our own experience. It is a gross distortion of the Cominform editorial.

It may not of course be possible in all guerilla areas to destroy roads on such a vast scale. That is not the point. But is it possible to talk of guerilla war in isolation from a mass movement, in *isolation from active popular support* (in some form or other), in isolation from the *links* that the party has forged by leading the people in their day-to-day battles? Is guerilla war possible merely on the basis of 'general support', 'hatred against the government' and 'organisational preparations'? Or does it require a *minimum level of the movement*?

A document prepared by the Andhra committee and circulated by the CC itself answers this question also.

After tracing the development of the struggle in Nalgonda and the various stages it went through, the document proceeds to say:

"If we see this history of guerrilla struggle of Telangana, then it becomes clear that this guerilla warfare is the *expression of the high level reached by the movement*, in the stage of land distribution and of establishing village people's councils. We are continuing the guerilla struggle even after the military intervention to defend the land and gram rajayalu and to extend these" ("Telangana Document, II").

The CC has also not noted the *organisational* lesson taught by Telangana.

".... how was it," asks the "Telangana Document II", "that the movement led by our party in Karimnagar, Adilabad and Marathwada districts was suppressed by the nizam gangs? Nizam was hated equally in these districts. The reason why the movement in Nalgonda and Warangal districts was able to withstand the nizam's gangs and developed into higher pitch and spread to neighbouring districts Atrabalda etc. was the existence of *organisational form* for the movement in these districts. The reason for the blow-up of the movement in other districts was the absence of this organisation and hence the failure to distribute land and establish village people's committees."

Even when every other factor is present it is the existence of a *strong organisation* that is of *decisive* importance for the successful conducting of armed struggle. This is the lesson of Telangana as also of every big struggle fought by us.

Active support of the people, who at Suryapet destroyed roads and made them impassable, a "high level reached by the movement" and a strong organisation—this is what made Telangana possible. This is the secret of Telangana's strength. This is why not merely the nizam, but even Nehru, with all his mighty and powerful hordes, has failed to crush Telangana. While we donot know whether all the tactics and slogans in Telangana were correct, we do know that armed struggle in Telangana was

and has been an integral part of the mass peasant movement for land and democracy.

Turning a blind eye to all this, ignoring the fact that we have no peasant movement under our leadership of any level in most provinces, the CC talks of putting the peasant movement 'on the rails of armed struggle' because 'objective conditions' are there 'in India as a whole'. And this it calls the Telangana path!

Armed action, resulting from the outlook that dominates the "CC Letter" can only be armed struggle, not as it developed in Telangana, but only the *organisation of counter-terror* against individual police officials, landlords and moneylenders, carried out by party cadres with the mass of people playing no role except as passive sympathisers. Such 'armed struggle' will not 'strengthen and extend' the party, nor forge its links with the masses, but will completely isolate the party and will result in party members being handed over to the police by villagers unable to withstand police terror. It is a matter of common experience that unless the people are united and are politically Organisationally and psychologically prepared to withstand terror, they feel helpless and demoralised when the full blast of terror is let loose. And armed action of this type will certainly not achieve this unity nor prepare the people politically, organisationally and psychologically.

The "CC Letter" informs us that armed struggle is being conducted in Ahmednagar (Maharashtra) and a number of other areas. We do not know about these other areas, but we do know that the type of "armed struggle" that has been on in Ahmednagar is nothing but the organisation of raids on the houses of moneylenders and of counter-terror against individual oppressors and that as the result of this type of 'struggle' the party in Ahmednagar has been severely weakened, the kisan sabha virtually smashed and our comrades are finding it difficult to get even shelter from the terror-stricken villagers. Today there is no peasant movement of any type in Ahmednagar district or anywhere in Maharashtra under our leadership. We would therefore request the CC to get facts about Ahmednagar as well as other areas where armed struggle is reported to be waged.

### **A Line of Blind Adventurism**

The "Andhra Document", from which we have given the extract about the extent of mass participation in the Telangana struggle and which has not been accepted by the CC contains, however, along with many correct formulations, other formulations and directives of an extremely adventurist and terrorist nature. We quote one of them :

"The tasks of these town guerilla squads are: to finish off notorious government officials who take special delight in oppressing the people, landlords who after committing untold atrocities in the villages take protection in the towns and also the exploiters in the town and other agents who commit atrocities. These squads must destroy their properties, loot government and other exploiters' treasuries and cash, etc."

Obviously the phrase "exploiters in the towns and their agents" can be extended to include blackmarketeers, capitalists who refuse wage increase, ministers of the government, etc.

How is this, we would ask, different from terrorism? How is this different from individual murder and dacoity? How will this help to develop a mass movement against the government?

It goes without saying that it is not on grounds of humanitarianism but on *political* grounds that we oppose such actions. It goes without saying also that in a period of mass revolutionary battles, in a period of actual civil war, such actions as a part of the *general mass movement* are common. But to assert that such is the situation anywhere, even in Andhra is totally wrong. Such tactics and such methods of 'struggle', no matter what high-sounding name is given to them, would degenerate into murder and banditry, dissipate our forces, play into the hands of agents-provocateurs, isolate the party from all honest elements, and supply weapons to the government to discredit and suppress the party and the movement let by it.

Such is the length to which the blind sectarianism and adventurism has gone.

Why has the CC worked out this blindly adventurist line? Why has it isolated the question of *form of struggle* from the



*level of the mass movement?* Why has it tried to discover a 'new yardstick' to measure the level of mass consciousness?

One of the reasons, as we once pointed out, is that the CC wants to find shortcuts to revolution. It cannot deny the reality that today the party has been seriously weakened, stands isolated in the working-class itself, is leading no peasant movement in the greater part of the country, its mobilising power is far less than at any time during the last ten years. But having pinned its faith in guerilla struggle 'in the country as a whole', the CC has to fit that struggle in the existing frame of national-political reality. It has set before itself the task of evolving a method of guerilla struggle which the party can undertake in its *present stage of struggle*, with the mass movement at its *present level*, with our mass organisation shattered on paralysed by self-sectarian policies and methods.

The result is the 'new line'.

But this is not all. There is other causes also.

### **Failure to Learn from History**

We are of the opinion that one of the root causes for this is in the CC's inability to understand the *events of the last three years and their lessons*. The CC's formulations about civil war not merely do not help to learn these lessons but hinder this task.

As the CC documents show, the CC thinks that the only or at least the main weapon used by the government against the people during these years has been the weapon of terror. Also that the main reason for our setbacks has been our failure to evolve guerilla forms of struggle to fight this terror.

Both these statements are only partially true. They give a *false and distorted picture of the reality*. They make us blind to our real failures and therefore blur the real tasks.

When saying this, we do not in the least dispute the fact that our comrades in Telangana and in Madras Presidency had to face a terror regime of a most brutal type. We also do not dispute that the forms of guerilla struggle adopted by the Telangana comrades which enabled them to fight back the terror of the government are an extremely valuable heritage of this period and would be of immense value to comrades everywhere.

But the enemy has not used the weapon of terror alone. He has used other weapons also. If terror alone had been sufficient to preserve imperialist rule, the imperialists would not have had to make a 'tactical retreat' and come to terms with the Congress, thereby enlisting the support of the most astute and experienced bourgeois leadership existing in any colonial country.

Against the popular movement, the government has wielded *not one but three weapons*.

(1) It has sought to wipe out the party by methods of terror—mass arrests, bans, cool-blooded murder of our comrades, punitive expeditions against our villages, murder, rape, loot, collective fine, etc. as well as bloody suppression of strikes.

(2) It has utilised the immense prestige of the Congress and also increasingly the service of rightwing socialists *to disrupt the mass organisations and mass movement*—disruption of the AITUC and the AIRF, setting up of rival kisan sabhas, student unions, sabotage of mass struggles, diversion of mass movement into harmless channels like satyagraha, fast, etc.

(3) It has utilised *constitutionalist illusions* by holding before the people the promise of election on the basis of adult franchise, thus holding back from decisive revolutionary action even those sections of masses who have already lost faith in the government and want to change it.

Such are the weapons that the government has used to destroy the vanguard in isolation, to disrupt the people's movement, to sow disunity in the ranks of the popular masses, to paralyse the people. The present low level of our movement and its extreme uneven and unorganised character prove that the efforts of the astute leaders of the Indian big bourgeoisie have not been entirely fruitless. In our opinion, it is the failure of the CC to understand the complex nature of the government's policies, the cunning way in which it has attempt to defeat the forces of revolution, that is largely responsible for the one-sided nature of the tactical line the CC has worked out. *A distorted and wrong understanding of events cannot but result in a distorted and wrong tactical line.*

The CC reduces the whole question of struggle against the government to a question to correct *military tactics*—guerilla

war as against frontal attack. The whole section on "forms of struggles" in the "Report on Left Deviation" deals exclusively with this question. The CC fails to see the *political* weapons used by the government against the people, the *political* offensive it launched against the party on an all-India scale, and seeks to work out a tactical line of fighting the government whose core and essence is 'correct military tactics'. It is due to the mechanical attempt to equate military battles with political battles that it does not understand the real nature of the mistake of the old leadership.

The party could defeat the policies of the government and rally the masses under its banner and itself grow only if it had correctly understood the nature of the weapons used by the enemy, only if it had *combined* the guerilla struggle in Telangana and other areas with the task of building *people's unity* on a national scale, with the task of *disillusioning the masses* through their own experience and leading them forward step by step. This is precisely what the party failed to do.

The old PB under the leadership of Ranadive, also saw only one aspect of the government's policy, the aspect of the terror. It shut its eyes to the fact that the strength of the government lay in the disunity of the people, in the prevalence of the constitutionalist illusions, and it formulated the 'tactical line' of fighting government terror by means of 'militant action'. The line was carried out in detail in Bengal disregarding all criticism, all opposition from rank-and-file members of the party.

According to the Bengal committee's report, railway stations were attacked, bombs were thrown on trams and buses, attempts were made to break-up Nehru's meeting with only our own supporters, the house of Suren Ghose, the Bengal Congress president, was attacked, fire was set to Congress offices (see Bengal committee's self-critical report). These acts as well as the use of acid bulbs in meetings and demonstrations were part of the old leadership's 'revolutionary' line.

Terrorism and even gangsterism masqueraded as the line of the 'struggle against the bourgeoisie'. What havoc had this caused, everyone can see today.

Can a real change, a change in practice, result merely because the new CC recognises that the struggle is not a "struggle against the bourgeoisie" but a "struggle against imperialists, feudalists and big bourgeoisie" and the main battlefield is not cities but rural areas. Only children would believe that. As long as we do not see that the main weapon in the fight against the government is the weapon of people's unity as long as we do not see how and why the government has succeeded in the keeping the movement at its present level, as long as we do not see the government terror can be fought only by rousing the people, the whole attempt would be to work out a policy whose essence is the organisation of counter-terror. It would be a policy of blind *retaliation against individual oppressors of the people* — landlords, money-lenders and police officers—of looting their property in the name of 'expropriation', of 'finishing them off', in the name of guerilla struggle. It will be a policy of 'tooth for tooth, eye for eye' as formulated so eloquently in the 'Andhra document'.

It will be a policy which will not merely dissipate the forces of the party, but lead to the liquidation of the party itself. Such is the character of the present CC line.

This liquidationist tendency is also seen in the manner in which the CC wants to use our legal newspapers to 'popularise' the party line.

As everyone knows, the old PB conducted the party papers not merely in a sectarian manner but with utter disregard for all legal considerations. The issue of the *People's Age* on the eve of the proposed 9th March action was a classic example of these madness. Even subsequently, as we pointed out in a note sent to Ranadive, the paper continued to be conducted in a most adventurist manner, indulging in open glorification of bomb-throwing.

Not learning from all this, the new CC insisted on the publication in our open paper of a statement that the party is going to take to the path of Telangana in every part of the country, that this is the essence of the new CC line. What risk such a statement creates not merely for the paper but for the press itself, the CC did not bother to find out. And when comrades working

on the paper deleted this part from the CC statement, they were pulled up by the CC for distorting the party line. But for the firmness the comrades showed, but for their insistence that the sentence must be deleted on legal grounds which ultimately made the CC re-consider the question, we might have been today without a paper and without a press.

On the one hand, the CC declares the present period to be a period of civil war and white terror; on the other, it wants to run our legal papers to openly advocate and glorify armed struggle. It does not bother if that means the liquidation of the paper itself and our main link with the people being snapped.

### **Why this Failure?**

The question that the comrades will inevitably ask is : How could it be that the Andhra comrades, who built and led the Telangana movement and were the first to make a basic correction in the political thesis, work out such a wrong line? Is it not on the contrary more likely that we are mistaken and the line given by the CC is a correct application of the Telangana experience and of the Chinese path?

We shall try to answer this question briefly.

In the first place, the Andhra document of June 1948, though correct in many vital respects, made wrong formulations about civil war and also failed to see the complex nature of the government's policies, the various weapons used by the government.

Secondly, while we are not yet in possession of adequate facts to assess the exact character of the armed struggle in Andhra, it appears to us from what little we have been able to learn that, barring certain areas in Andhra, the struggle there is not of the same nature as in Telangana. In Telangana, guerilla struggle developed on the crest of a rising mass peasant movement for land, it was in the nature of a *peasant uprising*. In Andhra on the contrary or at least in many parts of Andhra, the struggle is essentially of a retaliatory character—armed squads of ours attacking landlords, money-lenders and policemen with the mass of people plying no role except as sympathisers. It is this type of

armed struggle that the CC wants to extend all over the country and that too in the absence of a strong party and strong organisation as exist in Andhra.

Thirdly, as stated in the "Organisational Report of the CC", Rajeswara Rao, the former PB member from Andhra and the present general secretary, himself made an 'opportunist surrender' to the old PB and accepted all the three PB documents (December 1948) which not merely condemned Mao-Tse-tung but advocated an adventurist trotskyite line, pinning faith in 'bold lead' and 'militant action'. The "Report on Left Deviation", drafted by the Andhra comrades and accepted by the PB makes a totally inadequate criticism of the old PB's line, does not stress how we were guilty of *overestimation* of the situation and ran ahead of the masses, instead of leading them forward step by step.

Fourthly, and above all, the overwhelming majority of CCMs had wholeheartedly and 'unreservedly' supported all the slogans and tactics of the old PB, had themselves been the instruments in the provinces in executing the PB line, both politically and organisationally, some of them going beyond the PB itself in sectarianism and adventurism. And it is *these same CCMs* who have 'unreservedly' accepted the new line because the basic outlook, as we have shown, at the root of the new line is in no way different from the old outlook. It is only a shift from the cities to the villages. The blind faith in the miraculous power of 'bold lead' and 'militant action' expresses itself again in a new way. No wonder therefore that the old authors of sectarianism and adventurism have lined up behind the 'new' line.

We shall now sum up our criticism of the new line of the CC:

(1) It is a line which continues the *sectarian strategy* of the old PB, though in a modified form, as seen as in the attitude towards rich peasants and middle bourgeoisie.

(2) It is a line of drawing *mechanical parallels* with China and not a line based on concreted analysis of the situation in our own country.

*It is also based on gross exaggeration of the stage of our movement (civil war, etc.), of the maturity of the situation.*

of the stage of mass consciousness, of our own strength, influence and mobilising power.

(4) It is a line that *ignores the position of the working class* in our country, ignores the lesson of our history about the role of mass working-class to a state of passivity and the practice leads to denial of working-class leadership itself.

(5) It is a line which, on the plea of white terror, ignores the task of working out a *concrete mass policy*, for mass mobilisation and mass action on the burning issues, facing the people—peace, civil liberties, refugee rehabilitation, agrarian reform, etc. overestimating the strength of the government and underestimating the strength of the government and underestimating the strength of democratic forces in the country.

(6) It is a line which in the name of a “new yardstick” ignores the lesson of Telangana, assigns to the masses the role of *passive sympathisers* and not active participants in the struggle against the government.

(7) It is a line which takes no account of the *uneven level* of our movement and seeks to work out stereotyped tactics and slogans, isolating the form of struggle from the level of the movement.

(8) It is a line which, on the plea of ‘objective conditions’, minimises the supreme importance of *consciousness and organisation*, minimises the importance of the party itself and does not place the rebuilding of the party and reforging of its links with masses in the forefront of our task.

(9) It gives a line which ignores the *specific tasks of our movement* as formulated in the Cominform editorial and argues that all tasks will get fulfilled through resort to armed struggle.

(10) It is a line based on one-sided and *distorted understanding* of the events of the last three years—on failure to see that the strength of the government lies in the disunity of the anti-imperialist forces and therefore takes no step to build this unity.

(11) It is a line which in the name of guerilla war advocates a policy of adventurism of the worst type which can only further weaken the party and strengthen our enemies.

(12) It is a line of *liquidation* of party.

For all these reasons, we are totally opposed to the line given in the CC documents and are of the opinion that it should be rejected.

The criticism that we have made against the CC line as given in the "CC Letter" should not be taken to mean that we consider that all the formulations made by the CC to be wrong or all the documents issued by it entirely left-sectarian and adventurist. The "Report on Left-Sectarian Deviation" contains a valuable and on the whole a correct criticism of the theoretical formulations of the old PB. The Andhra document "Present Revolutionary Situation and forms of struggle" contains, together with mistakes, many correct formulations and directions about the way armed struggle is to be developed. The need for building mass organisations and mass movement has been stated in a number of CC documents as well as the need to combine all forms of struggle.

But we must not forget that there were many correct formulations in the documents issued by the old PB also. They also stated the need to build popular unity, to build working-class unity, to create mass organisations ("Strategy & Tactics" document, "TU Fraction Report", etc.). Yet, as we know, all these directions remained on paper. Why?

Because the very basis of correct tactics is a correct assessment of the level of the movement, a correct analysis of the situation and correct estimation of the class forces. Tasks flow out of such an analysis. If the analysis is wrong, certain tasks, even though mentioned, will not be *emphasised* and attempt would be made to carry them out in the *wrong way*.

Ranadive argued that the government is completely isolated, that reformists are thoroughly exposed, that the situation was ripe for an 'all-India assault' and people were merely waiting for a 'bold lead'. Such an estimation of the situation could not but lead to sectarian slogans and adventurist tactics, to the conclusion that all tasks would be solved by initiation of 'direct action'.

Are not similar results bound to follow from formulations about civil war, about the situation being ripe for 'smashing the power of the ruling class', about the possibility of guerilla war



in the country 'as a whole'? Will this not divert attention from the immediate tasks of building a mass movement and creating mass organisations, even though these tasks are mentioned, and lead to *main concentration* on the work of organising guerilla bands and 'finishing off' the hated officials, zamindars, etc.?

We think all this is bound to happen. A wrong understanding of the situation can never lead to correct tactics, can never result in the actual implementation of even correct slogans.

### **Organisational Methods of the CC**

We have examined the CC documents at some length. We have tried to substantiate our criticism that the new CC has failed to correct the mistakes of the old PB and is in practice pursuing the same barren path of left-sectarianism and adventurism which brought disaster on the party. We have tried to show that in its assesment of the situation, in its methods of analysis, in its basic apoproach and in its concrete practice, the new CC has failed to make a break with the past. This in our opinion, is the reason why it has failed to solve the inner-party crisis.

Even in its organisational policy, the methods of the present CC are similar to that of the old PB. The document "Main Features of the Present Situation" (Document No 16) was placed before the ranks as a draft resolution and comrades were asked to discuss it and were informed that an "Open Forum" would be brought out to acquaint the comrades with the views of various party units. Then came two more resolutions of the PB (Documents No 19 and 20) but no "Forum". In the month of July comrades were suddenly informed that the CC had been 'reconstituted' with nine comrades of the old CC and that the new CC had adopted a 'new' line which must now be implemented. The sole criterion for the 'reconstitution' of the CC was 'unreserved acceptance' of its interpretation of the Cominform editorial and the advocacy and initiation of 'armed struggle' in the countryside.

In the new CC was included Somnath Lahiri, a member of the old PB who, along with the three other leaders of the PB, must bear full responsibility for the political policies and organisational decisions of the last two and a half years.

Also the comrade from Maharashtra (S. V. Parulekar) who, it is known to all, planned the most outrageous kind of terrorist action for 9th March this year (1950) and was responsible for smashing up the party in Maharashtra.

His claim that he had opposed the sectarian line of the old PB and fought for a correct line is totally false, as can be seen from the letter that he wrote to the PHQ comrades after the publication of the Cominform editorial. Scolding these comrades who had thought that the Cominform editorial demanded a change in the party line, this CCM wrote: *"I feel that the present policy does not in any way conflict with the tasks laid down in the Cominform editorial."* Further, "they (PHQ comrades) are talking of different party line or revision of party line. *This cannot be allowed*". All this shows not merely his hardened sectarianism and his refusal to accept correction even from international leaders, but also his insufferable bureaucratic outlook.

The same CC member also stated in the CC meeting of May 1950 that there are 400 party members in the Worli areas—an assertion so fantastic that it would stagger anyone who knows anything about the area. The truth is that today there is neither any movement nor any party organisation in these areas.

Two old PB members, including the general secretary, who according to the CC itself were guilty among other crimes of suppression of international documents, the most heinous crime for a communist, were merely removed from the CC and not suspended from the party. One of them, Adhikari, it is reported, has been placed in the central agit-prop committee together with Bhowani Sen, another author of the policies and methods of the last two years. Finally, the provincial committees are being disbanded and organising committees formed from top, without any reference to the ranks, of the nominees of the CC who accept the new line 'unreservedly', mostly those same people who were responsible for all the mistakes and crimes of the last two and a half years and those who had accepted Ranadive's slogans also 'unreservedly'. At the head of the new trade-union fraction, we learn, is the same comrade (D. S. Vaidya) who always gave false and exaggerated reports about the position in the GIP Railway Union who has been the most loyal lieutenant of Ranadive all

these years and who even after the publication of the Cominform editorial maintained that the PB's line was correct since 'all the peasantry' did not include 'rich peasantry'.

It is necessary to quote from the "Organisational Report" of the CC itself to bring out how the CC assesses the mistakes of the old leaders and how that assessment affects its new organisational decisions.

Regarding Lahiri, an old PB member from Bengal, the report says:

"Lahiri, from a *reformist outlook* had, in the beginning doubts about the tactical line. This was realised by the general secretary and Bhowani Sen, who considered him an utter reformist not to be relied upon to push through the left-sectarian and titoite methods of the two leaders of the PB (Bhowani Sen and the general secretary)... It was for this that he was virtually reduced by the PB to the position of a PC member and there too to take the responsibility of technical and organisational matters only... Under the circumstances, he had not much to do with the functioning of the PB and its methods.

"But gradually he began to grow into an *ardent convert to the extreme left-sectarian line, in cases going even to more extremes than some others*, viz his stand on Sarat Bose's election, on the April shootings in Calcutta, in his suggestions for adventurist action against the police, etc. However he lacked both the conceit and the conviction for the left-sectarian line which the PB leaders possessed and as late as July 1949 had offered to resign from the PB" (emphasis added).

First a reformist, then an "ardent convert to the extreme left-sectarian line" who, in certain respects, "went to more extremes than others" and advocated the most adventurist types of action—such is the record of his comrade. He lacked 'conviction for the left-sectarian line which can only mean that he was a rank opportunist, who *pretended* to be an 'ardent convert' and advocated 'adventurist types of action' to win the favour of the general secretary and to 'rehabilitate' himself in his eyes. This opportunism of a most revolting type has qualified this comrade for membership of the new CC merely because he had once "offered to resign from the PB".

About the PB member from Madras, N.K. Krishnan, the CC has to say this;

“N.K. Krishnan has been a virtual PC member for the last two years except for brief priods when he was at the centre. Hence *he had not much to do with the Titoite methods of the PB* except for the anti-international attitude against the international parties and their leaders, which he admitted in his speech at his self-criticism. But he wobbled on th issue of 9th March, took an opportunist stand with regard to the PB resolution dissolving the Tamilnadu PC secretariat and acted as the *main instrument of the PB in liqidating the party and the mass movement in Tamilnadu by using Titoite-Turkish methods*. The details could be got in his self-critical report” (emphasis added).

What sense can one make of this passage? In one sentence, we are told that Krishnan “had not much to do with the Titoite methods of the PB”. In th very next sentence we are informed that he was “the main instrument of the PB in liquidation the party and the mass movement by using Titoite-Turkish methods”. It must be remembered that in Tamilnadu we had the *strongest proletarian base* in the whole country and a comrade who is responsible for smashing up this base is declared to be one who “had not much to do” with the Titoite methods of the PB. Are we to conclude that merely because Krishnan’s sphere of operation was restricted to *one province* and not the whole country as in the case of Ranadive, he ‘had not much to do’ with the havoc that Ranadive’s policy created when he acted as the ‘main instrument’ of that policy? Are we to conclude that a PB member’s responsibility in the province where he had been made the supreme leader, becomes any less because he had become a “virtual PC member”?

For the ‘service’ that Krishanan has rendered to the party, he has been ‘consulted’ in forming the leading committee of Tamilnadu by the same CC which condemns him for his ‘anti-international attitude’, for his ‘opportunism’ and for his using ‘Titoite-Turkish methods’ which liquidated the party and the mass movement in ‘Tamilnadu.

How does the CC explain this glaring contradiction between its words and its deeds? How does it justify its action in foisting on the ranks the same leaders who brought disaster on the party?

By arguing that cadres are not created in a day, that we must not treat 'cadres shabbily like dirt', that we must value 'experience' and so on. As a matter of fact, the CC is *treating* cadres 'shabbily' and like 'dirt' by imposing on them, in the name of re-organisation, the old leaders who played havoc with the party. The 'cadres' it seems to value most are the same old left-sectarian leaders. This is our experience in Bombay also. Regarding other centres we cannot say much, but if this is how the CC wants to 'correct' the old leaders, we can only say that ruin would overtake the party in every province and every district.

No one has proposed that *all* the old leaders must be thrown out from all positions. But certainly those who were *mainly* responsible for the policies and methods of the last two years cannot be kept in and position till they have proved *by their deeds* any not merely by their 'self-criticism' that they can be trusted and till they have won back the *confidence* of the ranks.

After narrating the crimes of the PB leaders—sectarian policies adventurist actions, terror regime inside the party, double standard and favouritism, virtual liquidation of the CC and suppression of international documents, distortion of Lenin and Stalin—after all this, the new CC tells us that "it is wrong to characterise the PB as Trotskyite-Titoite body simply because it adopted Trotskyite-Titoite political line and organisational methods. It is doubly wrong to characterise the PCs and DCs and other party committees as Trotskyite-Titoite ~~bodies~~ because they were re-organised by the PB or they carried out the directions of the PB. This is the formal logic of a bourgeois logician and not of a dialectical materialist".

How the question of 'dialectical materialism' arises here, the CC alone can explain. It has evaded the real issue by trying to show the distinction between 'Formal logic' and 'dialectical materialism'.

No one would condemn *all* party committees wholesale and demand the total disbandment. But as far as the *main* leaders of

the PB are concerned, especially the two who were guilty of suppression of international documents, the general secretary and Adhikari, the minimum that is needed is their immediate suspension from the party for an indefinite period, their cases to be reviewed after five years at least. As regards the others in the PCs, those mainly responsible must be debarred from holding any position for at least some period. Not to do even this, to emphasise the distinction between a Titoite body and a body that follows titoite policies and methods, to prattle about 'dialectical materialism'—all this means to condone the worst type of anti-party crimes, to disrupt the party completely and to destroy all confidence that the party ranks have in the leadership.

The same CC that shows so much concern for the old leadership has declared in its "Letter to the PHQ Comrades" that those who do not accept its new line 'unreservedly' must 'stand aside' and not to be in any party committee and in Bombay this 'criterion' has been laid down even for membership of the women's fraction committee.

The CC has not merely distorted the Cominform article. It has distorted and misinterpreted the international documents laying down organisational principles as well.

The "Thesis on the Structure and Organisation of Communist Parties" of the CI gives the guiding rule for the constitution of the CC as follows:

*"In order to study the general political situation and gain a clear idea of the state of affairs in the party, it is necessary to have various localities represented on the central committee whenever decisions are to be passed affecting the life of the entire party. For the same reason, differences of opinion regarding tactics should not be suppressed by the central committee if they are of a serious nature. On the contrary, these opinions should get representation on the central committee...!"*

This passage is quoted by the CC in its "Report on Organisational Activities". But from this clear-cut direction, the conclusion that the CC draws in the very next para is:

*"What should be the criterion for the election of members of the new CC?"*

**“Unreserved acceptance of the new line of the party.”**

Further, “...the PCs, POCs, DCs and other party committees have to be re-organised from those who are at present in the committees and others outside on the following line...

*“The members accept the new line.* Those who oppose the line either from right-reformist or left-sectarian ends, have to be kept out.

“This does not mean”, the CC proceeds to say, “that every syllable of the interpretation of the CC of the lead of the information bureau should be accepted. But the agrarian revolution and the *armed guerilla struggle as the main form of struggle*, and the strategy given by the information bureau should be accepted” (emphasis added).

Thus not merely the CC but *all* party committees are being ‘reconstituted’ with only those who accept that *armed guerilla struggle* must be the main form of struggle *today*. Anybody who does not accept this is a ‘right reformist’ who has to be ‘kept out’ from all committees.

Could distortion and dishonesty go any further? Could there be a grosser and more open violation of all principles laid down by the international communist documents than this?

It is not a secret to the CC that there are sharp difference existing today on this very issue—the issue of tactics. The CC with an appearance of magnanimity says that it does not demand agreement on ‘every syllable’. But then it proceeds to lay down that not merely the strategy but also the *tactical line* formulated by it must be accepted by all who want to ‘qualify’ for membership of not merely the central committee but of *all* committees.

In pursuance of this ‘interpretation’ of the CC-thesis and on the basis of this ‘Criterion’ the Bombay and Maharashtra committees are being broken up, loyal and experienced comrades whose only crime is that they do not agree with the CC’s line, are being thrown out and the committee reconstituted with the same old leaders—hardened bureaucrats, incorrigible factionalists and extreme left sectarians who dittoed all the crimes of the old PB and who have accepted the ‘new’ line also with equal alacrity.

Even rank-and-file comrades not agreeing with the CC's interpretation of the Cominform article are being 'dropped' from the party on one pretext or another or forced into inactivity, boycotted and ignored.

What difference is there between the organisational methods of the old leadership and the new leadership? Are they not strikingly similar?

Is it any wonder that comrades in many places openly describe the new line as 'old wine in new bottle' and the organisational changes as a mere 'reshuffle'? Is it any wonder that the inner-party crisis remains unresolved full eight months after the Cominform editorial?

The present stage of affairs, if allowed to continue, will completely destroy the party. The first task of course is to work out a correct line on the Cominform article, the concrete conditions of our movement and the experience of Telangana. But that alone is not enough. We have also to evolve a correct leadership to carry out that line. Political and organisational steps have to be taken simultaneously.

The parts of the "Report on Left-Sectarian Deviation" which deal with the theoretical criticism of the old PB documents are, in our opinion, basically correct and would help the task of clarification (though certain formulations about people's democracy should be re-examined in the light of Astafyey's article). The other parts must be completely re-drafted; the "Letter to the Party Ranks" must be immediately withdrawn and the line given in it nailed down as a line of petty-bourgeois revolutionism and as a distortion of the Cominform editorial. A new resolution must be prepared and placed before a specially convened party congress, consisting of *elected* delegates from the provinces.

Steps must be taken at once to convene provincial conference and elect provincial committees.

This must, however, be preceded by:

(1) Draft report and resolution on the situation in each province and the tasks of the party.

(2) Removal of factionalists, left-sectarians and hardened bureaucrats from the provincial committees.



(3) Removal of suspension and expulsion orders in case of all those who were victims of the Titoite methods of the old leadership, as well as open withdrawal of all wrong or exaggerated censure resolutions.

All these steps are essential.

About the first step we need not say anything, for it is obvious that no political discussion is possible on the basis of the documents issued by the CC till now. We need concrete analysis, concrete tasks, immediate slogans.

The two other steps proposed by us also should be accepted by the CC.

The CC admits that the old leadership was guilty of Titoite method inside the party, that it reconstituted provincial committees with men of its choice. But if that admission has any meaning, then these same men in provincial committees cannot be trusted to prepare for party conferences in an honest manner. We are not asking that *all* of them must be removed. But certainly those who were the main supporters of the old line and old methods cannot remain in any responsible position and must be replaced by others, who enjoy the confidence of the ranks and who can be trusted to permit full and frank discussion.

Also those who were the victims of the factional and Titoite methods of the leadership and were suspended or expelled from the party must be taken back. Then only we can have real provincial conference that will help to unify the party.

We are also of the opinion that P. C. Joshi must be given a party trial. We do not endorse the politics preached by him in his *Views* nor the methods he adopted after his expulsion. But it is necessary to ascertain whether the expulsion was justified or whether it was an act of vindictiveness. Further, whether his anti-party crimes are so serious as to debar him for all times from the party membership. Even if it is so, a proper trial is necessary for this would destroy any sympathy that he can evoke today by making out that he has been unjustly treated. He be asked to stop all publications and other anti-party activities, which if he refuses to do should itself be sufficient ground for confirmation of his expulsion.

### **Basic Necessity—A Correct Tactical Line**

It is not possible for us to work out a new tactical line in the absence of a political-organisational report and without thorough discussion with the CC members. We shall attempt here only to broadly outline certain immediate tasks that the party has to carry out.

The “Tactical Principles of Leninism”, as defined by Stalin in his “Comments on Current Affairs in China” are as follows:

“1. The principle of the necessity of taking into account the national peculiarities and the national characteristics of each nation while working out the guiding instructions of the Comintern for the workers’ movement of that nation.

“2. The principle of the necessity for the communist party every country of utilising the smallest possibilities of securing mass allies for the proletariat, even if they are temporary, vacillating, wavering or unreliable.

“3. The principle of the necessity of taking into account the truth that propaganda and agitation are not enough for the political education of millions of the masses. But that this demands the political experience of the masses themselves.”

There is no doubt that despite its relative development of industry and transport, India remains basically a colonial country with a colonial economy and the laws of development of colonial revolution apply fully to India. Our revolution has to develop broadly along the same path as in China with agrarian revolution as its axis and through the creation of liberated areas in the countryside, where revolutionary armies are raised and nourished. Not merely the example of China but also the live and concrete experience of Telangana proves beyond all doubt that this is the path that the Indian revolutionary movement has to take in order to destroy imperialist rule and achieve freedom and people’s democracy.

We think however that because of the existence of a fairly strong and centralised state apparatus in India and the developed means of transport and communication, while it is possible and *imperative* to create partisan areas and guerilla pockets of the Telangana type wherever we can, these areas, especially in the

plains, will develop into stable liberated areas when the mass movement in the greater part of the country has risen to a high level, has extended and deepened, making it impossible for the enemy to concentrate his forces at any point and assailing him from all sides. Further, that in developing the mass movement to this level and in extending it all over the country, mass actions of the working-class will play a big role. Such is the experience of the revolutionary upsurge of 1945-46. That is why, while fully recognising the decisive importance of the agrarian revolutionary movement, we simultaneously stress the importance of developing mass working-class movement.

The general tasks facing our liberation movement are:

(1) To build a broad united front of all anti-imperialist classes, parties, sections and groups with workingclass-peasant unity as its main basis against imperialists and their collaborators.

(2) To unite the working-class and make the workingclass the leader of this front— a leadership, which will be realised by organisation of peasant struggles by the party and workers' activists, by the championship by workingclass and its party of the demands of all classes and leading their battles and by mass actions of the working-class, political and economic.

(3) To build a mass communist party as the centre of the united anti-imperialist front and enlist in it the best elements from the workingclass and other fighting classes.

(4) To develop a broad peasant movement all over the country, to put this movement progressively on the rails of armed struggle, to introduce democratic reforms. In agrarian relations by mass mobilisation and direct action as in Telangana, to create armed forces in the rural areas and strong bases for their operation.

With the progressive consolidation of people's unity, with the progressive unification of the working-class and the establishment of its leadership, with the increasing strength and influence of the party and with the widening sweep of the peasant movement, more and more areas will talk to the path of Telangana and armed struggle will progressively become the main form of our struggle. Also the increasing sweep of the armed struggle and the growth of our guerilla armies will increasingly forge the fighting unity

of the people, give them courage and confidence, raise their fighting morale, make them look to the party and the working-class for leadership.

Any attempt to isolate the tasks from one another to stress one to the exclusion of the other, to make the formation of an all-embracing united front covering the whole country the precondition for armed struggle anywhere or to think that armed struggle of any type and anywhere will forge unity—any such attempt will lead either to relapse into reformism or to adventurism of the grossest type.

Terror, disruption and constitutionalist illusions have been the weapons used by the government against the people. But as the history of Andhra and Telangana shows, wherever the movement rises to a high level, wherever the weapons of disruption and illusion are not adequate, terror more and more becomes the *main* weapon.

This is going to happen in all parts of the country. With its growing isolation from the people, with the growing unity of revolutionary force, with growing disillusionment among the mass of people, the government will everywhere *increasingly resort to terror as its main weapon*. And armed struggle of the people must *increasingly become their main weapon* in the battle against the government. Both the old outlook of countrywide insurrection following the general strike and also the outlook of the “CC Letter” are inadequate and therefore wrong. The perspective is one of the movement extending and deepening, armed struggle spreading to newer and newer areas and engulfing the whole country.

But such a *general perspective* and a general statement of our task is not enough for working out a correct tactical line. That is possible only on the basis of a correct assessment of the present national-political situation in our country. We shall indicate only a few features.

As we have stated in the very beginning, one of the most characteristic features of the situation in our country is that the popular movement remains at a low level and its growth has not kept pace with the growth of popular opposition to the government.

We have shown that this is due not merely to repression but also primarily to the existing dis-unity in the ranks of the popular forces and the prevalence of constitutionalist illusions among large sections of our people. Against the people, the government has used not the weapon of terror alone. It has also used the weapon of disruption and the weapon of creating constitutionalist illusions.

Today large masses of our people have come to realise that the present government cannot solve any of the problems facing them. They are realising the fact that without basic social changes—nationalisation of industries, abolition of landlordism, etc.—it is not possible to solve the problem of food, the problem of cloth, the problem of bare necessities of life. They see how shamelessly the government has violated every pledge it gave to the people. They want the present government to go and a new government take its place—a government which will not bow down to the vested interests.

While sweeping generalisations like ‘the Congress is thoroughly exposed before the entire people’ are based on exaggeration, there is no doubt that the mass base of the Congress has shrunk rapidly during the last three years. So deep is the crisis, so powerful the impact of world events, so outrageous the policies of the government, that this process, which in a normal situation would have taken a long time, is being fulfilled in an incredibly short period. The disintegration in the Congress is itself a result and reflection of this process. Today in UP, one of the firmest bases of the Congress, thousands of congressmen are in open revolt and have already enrolled over a lakh of members in the rival People’s Congress. The Workers’ and Peasants’ Party of Maharashtra, which broke away from the Congress, succeeded in inflicting a crushing defeat on the Congress in the Kolaba by-elections and was actively supported by the village intelligentsia—teachers, etc.—who in the past had always been staunch supporters of the Congress. Other defeats suffered by the Congress, even on the basis of restricted franchise, in Calcutta, Bombay, Cochin-Travancore and in numerous municipal and district board elections tell the same story.

Need for radical measures and need for a new government to effect such measures— these have already become and are becoming part of the consciousness of larger and larger sections of our people.

But it would be a profound mistake to think that even these sections have already come to realise that the present government can only be overthrown by force, by armed action. On the contrary, the illusion that since the Congress could 'capture power' without a revolution, 'others' also can do the same— this illusion is widespread not merely in the petty bourgeoisie in towns and villages, but also in large sections of the working class. The socialists, rival Congress factions and others are utilising this illusion to strengthen their own position.

Comrades who focus attention only on economic factors and argue that the 'basic causes' that gave birth to the revolutionary upsurge of 1945-46 continue, forget the *political* factors that affect the consciousness of our people today, the hope and illusions that have been created by the promise of elections on adult franchise next year.

This illusion is one of the biggest realities of the present Indian situation, a reality which we can ignore only by shutting our eyes. This is also one of the key reasons for the weakness of the popular movement.

Closely connected with this is the other reason—existing dis-unity in the working-class, dis-unity among the students, dis-unity among the peasantry, dis-unity of the left parties.

These weaknesses do not impose any insuperable difficulty. Other communist parties have overcome far greater difficulties. *The period we are passing through is a revolutionary period. Masses are learning fast. The urge for unity is growing. If we act correctly now, it will not be long before we are able to develop a powerful mass movement and create Telanganas in many areas.*

But all this will not happen spontaneously. Unity will have to be built consciously, illusions will have to be destroyed by *actually leading the masses in their battles, by enabling them to see through their own experience the correctness of the slogans and tactics of the party.*

There is no question of liquidating Telangana. It is a question of raising the movement in the rest of the country to the level of Telangana. It is a question of creating increasingly more Telanganas. Not by the methods suggested by the CC but by building the unity of the people and by developing powerful mass movement against the government and its policies.

The tasks are: Strengthen the alliance between the workers and the peasants, fight for agrarian reforms, build the broadest unity of the people.

It is the immediate undertaking of these tasks that will make Telanganas possible.

How are all these to be done? How is popular unity to be built? How will it develop? First and foremost, through *mass mobilisation and mass action on concrete issues facing our people and affecting their lives.*

To give form and direction to the growing mass opposition to the government and to mobilise it under our leadership, we have to work out and formulate a concrete programme which can immediately unite the progressive forces in our country, all sections ranging from progressive congressmen to communists.

Such a programme will include:

(1) Replacement of the present government by a democratic people's government. This government must be formed directly by the people and come into existence as the result of united revolutionary struggle by all anti-imperialist classes, sections, parties and groups.

(2) Quitting the commonwealth, prohibition of the atom bomb, demand for the withdrawal of all imperialist troops from Asia (Vietnam, Malaya etc.) and denunciation of American aggression in Korea, recognition of the Korean people's government and the democratic government of Vietnam, complete reversal of the Nehru government's foreign policy of subservience to Anglo-American imperialists as seen in the shameful stand on every issue in the UNO, including the bombing on Korean people.

(3) A policy of friendship and close co-operation with the Soviet Union, the Chinese People's Republic, the East European democracies and other democratic countries for peace, national

independence of all nations, repudiation of the agreement which allows recruitment of Gurkha soldiers and their being used by imperialists.

(4) Confiscation of all foreign capital in India, nationalisation of key industries and big banks and the undertaking of a plan to industrialise the country. State-aid to and encouragement of such small industries as benefit the people. Repudiation of all agreements with foreign monopoly interests that shackle our economy.

(5) Land to the tiller, no compensation to big landlords, Cancellation of peasant debts. Full aid to peasants to increase production, above all production of food.

(6) Abolition of states and their complete breaking up to form linguistic provinces. Stoppage of all privy purse for the princes, confiscation of their property.

(7) Removal from the armed forces of all Britishers and their agents. Formation of a people's army. Radical improvement in the condition of common soldiers and common policemen.

(8) Drastic reduction in the military budget and police budget. Public trial of those guilty of terror against the people.

(9) Democratic liberties for the people. Release of all political prisoners, repeal of public safety acts, withdrawal of labour black bills, right to strike.

(10) Living wage, security of service.

(11) Compulsory and free education.

(12) A uniform policy of food procurement, with fair price to the peasant and the main contribution from the landlords.

(13) Rationing of housing accommodation. Taking over the palatial mansions to house the homeless.

(14) A special tax on the rich for refugee rehabilitation. Adequate allowance and medical facilities for the refugees.

(15) Drastic action against profiteers and confiscation of their entire property.

*(16) Scragging of the present constitution. A democratic constitution Disbandment of the civil service. Officials elected by the people, controlled by them and subject to recall. Proportional representation.*



These are only a few points. The programme has to be filled in and concretised for each province.

Such a programme will immediately rally the anti-imperialist classes, parties, groups and individuals. It is our duty and our task to make this programme, the programme of our entire people. It must be popularised most extensively from our own platform, from the platform of the united left parties, in every meeting and demonstration and while waging every mass battle. More and more these slogans must become the slogans of the fighting masses themselves.

### **Workingclass Unity and Left Unity**

Workingclass unity and the unity of the left parties will be two most important weapons to forge the united front of the people.

"Never before in the whole history of the international working-class movement", says the resolution of the information bureau, "has working-class unity, both within the framework of individual countries and on a world scale, been of such decisive importance as at the present time. Unity in the ranks of the working-class is necessary in order to defend peace, to frustrate the criminal designs of the war-mongers and to frustrate the imperialist plot against democracy and socialism, to avert the establishment of fascist methods of domination, to offer a decisive rebuff to the campaign of monopoly capital against the vital interests of the working-class and to achieve an improvement in the economic position of the working-class".

Though adopted in November 1949, this resolution as far as our country is concerned has remained a dead letter. Little efforts have been made to heal the disastrous split in the working-class movement. This is because we have not yet realised to a sufficient extent the basic causes of the split and the role that this split plays in the overall plans of imperialism.

It is not an accident that *immediately after the war, both the Congress and the Socialist Party concentrated their attention on the working-class and strove their utmost to split it.*

"The post-war experience", says the Cominform resolution, "*showed that the policy of splitting the working class occupies*

one of the most important places in the arsenals of tactical means and methods used by the imperialists for the unleashing of a new war, for the suppression of the forces of democracy and socialism and for lowering the standard of living of the people."

Fully conscious of the importance of the working-class in India and Indian politics, the imperialists and their agents look upon working-class disunity as one of the key weapons in their plan to transform India into their base for the domination of Southeast Asia and for launching a war of aggression against the Soviet Union and the Chinese people. It is also one of the essential conditions for the establishment of fascist dictatorship in our country.

However, despite the efforts of the imperialists and their agents repeatedly during the last three years, the working-class has doggedly fought against the government and capitalist offensive and slowed it down; repeatedly their urge for unity has expressed itself in numerous strike battles, in mass demonstrations and clashes; repeatedly rank-and-file workers of different trade unions have forged unity on their own by standing shoulder to shoulder in the face of police attacks. The present great strike in Bombay has seen innumerable instances of such joint fight.

All these show that unity can be realised, unity must be realised.

Hitherto the party has failed to transform this urge for unity into a firm reality. From time to time it has made vague general appeals for unity but such abstract appeals could achieve nothing. Sectarian approach, sectarian methods, sectarian tactics, have marked our entire trade-union work as everyone of our trade-union leaders recognises today.

What unity can the working-class forge with the peasantry if itself remains disunited? What leadership can it supply to the people if even against the industrial relations bills it cannot move unitedly? What force can the party become in national politics if it remains isolated in its own class?

One mass union in each industry, one railwaymen's federation, one united trade-union congress—these must be our slogans and ~~these slogans must be realised in practice by the broadest unity~~  
campaign in the working-class and by the establishment of unity

*of action* of all workers for adequate bouns and minimum wage, against retrenchment, against the drive towadrs fascism and against the menace of war.

Immediate steps must be taken to establish unity with the UTUC on the basis of proposals made by them to the AITUC. Even in the ranks of the socialist workers, as the Hyderabad conference showed, the urge for unity has grown and they can and must be drawn into the unity movement.

Despite the reactionary policies of the socialist leaders and their open alliance with the American warmongers and their slandering of the Soviet Union, the socialist unions must not be placed in the same category as the INTUC unions. The socialist unions in many places have real mass membership, and honest and active working-class cadres who resent the policies of the leadership. These have to be won over for the slogan of trade-union unity by correct approach and by hard and sustained work, and by building unity in action. We have to expose before the mass of workers the Socialist Party's stand on the issue of the Korean war, the refusal of their leaders to sign the Stockholm appeal, the bureaucratic way in which they 'conduct' strikes without permitting the strikers to elect rank-and-file strike committees, the factional and anti-unity stand taken by them during the Bombay textile strike and on the issue of opposition to the black bills.

Workingclass unity, we want to emphasise again, must be the core of the united national front and this unity has to be achieved with the utmost rapidity. Simultaneously the political level of the working class must be raised, it must be freed from socialist influence and moved into action in defence of the rights and interests of all classes, especially the peasantry. "

It is only a united working-class and a working-class more and more consolidated under the banner of the party that can act as the leader of the people, halt the drive towards fascism and defeat the plans of the warmongers. *The effect of working-class unity on the middle classes, on students, on peasents, would be seen in the attracting of these classes towards the working-class and also in giving a tremendous impetus to the movement for*

all-round unity. Mass union embodying the unity of the working class would be able to move the entire class into action. It would be a big weapon in achieving people's unity. We shall get thousands of active workers to go to the rural areas and lead the peasants in their battles.

Of great importance also is the unity of the left parties and groups—the Communist Party, United Socialist Party, Forward Bloc, Workers' and Peasants' Party and others. The realisation of this unity would go a long way in healing the split in the working class, student and peasant movements. The party must immediately take steps to convene a meeting of these groups and parties and invite also the honest elements in the Socialist Party and left congressmen. We must make a direct appeal to the Socialist Party too though we know it will not accept the proposal. It will help however to expose it before its own ranks.

What immense force left unity can generate was seen in the South Calcutta by-election when the shattering defeat inflicted on the Congress candidate shook the Congress prestige all over the country. No left party by itself is strong enough to challenge the Congress today but their united strength is immense. Not merely would it bring their existing following together, but it would also have a galvanising influence on the vast number of people who hate the Congress, but see no way to fight it and are therefore sinking into a state of passivity and despair.

Barring the Socialist Party leadership, which really is not left but an agency of Anglo-American imperialists, in all left parties, the desire for unity has grown rapidly during the last few months, especially since the appearance of the Cominform editorial. The heroic fight of the Korean people has given added impetus to this urge and almost all left parties have denounced American aggression in unequivocal terms.

It is our task and our duty to give concrete expression to their urge for unity, to formulate a concrete programme for united campaign and *united action* and to contact the left parties. Such unity, we want to stress again, will play a big role in creating conditions for a united trade-union congress, united students' unions and united kishan sabhas as also for developing united

mass movement for peace. It will strengthen the anti-imperialist forces in the Socialist Party and draw into the movement masses of congressmen also.

This unity has to be not in the nature of a mere top agreement but above all unity for action. Also it does not mean abandonment of all criticism, but on the contrary presupposes such correct criticism as will help to expose the opportunist elements and draw the honest elements closer to us. As we know well, there are in these parties known careerists and opportunists who nevertheless have a mass following that can be only gradually won over. Many in these parties, especially in the United Socialist Party and Forward Bloc, are nothing more than bourgeois lefts who are bound to vacillate and even turn reactionary as the struggle develops and conflicts sharpen. All this demands a vigilant attitude, maintenance of the independence of the party at all costs and no merging of the party in the general left camp. It is necessary to stress this in view of the history of the past when united front with the Socialist Party led to opportunist surrender on many vital issues (1936-39).

We have to abandon the defeatist notion about the inevitability of fascism. We have to halt the drive towards fascism by mass mobilisation and mass action against every concrete manifestation of fascism, against every reactionary measure of the government. We have to unite our entire people of the struggle for civil liberties, for democratic rights.

The success achieved by the freedom of the press committee two years ago in mobilising democratic opinion against the representative measures of the government of Bombay could have been made the starting point for a determined and all-embracing campaign covering the whole country. Sectarian leadership of the party ignored this task, ignored the lessons of the mobilisation.

Opposition against the repressive measures of the government has mounted steadily and is being reflected even in a number of judgements of the high courts and supreme court (on the death sentences in Hyderabad, of the *Cross-roads* case, on the criminal law amendment act in Madras, on a number of habeas corpus petitions etc ) and in editorial comments of every bourgeois

newspaper. The volume of democratic opinion in the country is immense, is growing. It is for our party and our class to mobilise it and develop it as a part of the general democratic movement.

### **Slogan of Peace—A Slogan of Mass Mobilisation**

Today with Korean towns and villages being bombed by American imperialists, the issue of struggle against warmongers has come to the forefront and dominates the scene in every country of the world. The Nehru government's shameless stand on this issue has raised sharp criticism, even among its supporters. Our people have been profoundly stirred by the heroism of the Korean people. Even newspapers like the *Times of India* have condemned the Nehru government's policy.

Nevertheless our party has been able to do practically nothing in this matter. It has failed to utilise the occasion for driving home to our people the lessons of this war, the need to forge all-in unity for peace, to develop mass opposition to the imperialists and their servitors. We have failed to give expression to the popular sympathy with Korea and popular indignation against the imperialist aggressors.

Our peace movement has, barring a few places in Punjab, remained a movement confined to our own following. Our peace 'activity' has been nothing more than holding occasional conferences, marked by sectarian slogans, hot speeches and violent denunciation of the government, combined with half-hearted signature campaign. In a most crude and mechanical way, we have mixed up the issue of peace with every other conceivable issue and in such a manner that only those who agree with our stand on all these issue could join our 'peace movement'. We have not linked the issue of peace with the issue of the colossal military expenditure of the present government which imposes ever-growing burdens on the people, while neglecting their urgent needs. We have failed to mobilise mass opposition to the recruitment of Gurkha soldiers for murdering the patriots in Malaya. We have not made the issue of peace of live issue for our people by showing the connection between the war-drive and their own worsening conditions—civil liberties, the labour black bills, rising prices, etc.

Our All-India Peace Committee is nothing more than a body of trade-union leaders. It has not met even once since its formation. It has not issued even a statement since the beginning of American aggression in Korea. "India", as Jean Lafitte, general secretary of the World Peace Committee, said, "is a clear example of this type of *restricted peace movement*. This is hindering the harnessing of the immediate possibilities that exist in India."

American films showing the bombing of Korean towns and villages are being screened everywhere. We have not organised any protest this. We have collect less than 300,000 signatures to the Stockholm appeal. We have produced practically no literature in Indian languages on this issue. Our leadership seems to think that since our struggle for freedom is itself a struggle against warmongers, no special importance need be attached to the peace movement, apart from this struggle. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Not merely our duty to the international democratic movement, but the interest of our own liberation movement demand a total break with this opportunist line.

With the party in its present state of isolation from the democratic masses, from the progressive intelligentsia, from elements in the Congress, from the women, the slogan of peace can be one of the most powerful weapons to reforge our links with the people. It can be a most powerful weapon to build the democratic unity of the people and to bring together all progressive elements ranging from honest congressmen to communists on one platform. It can helps us to build our contact with the rank-and-file members of the armed forces who do not want to be used by the imperialists and made cannon fodder to further imperialist policies. It can help us to mobilise women on the largest scale, among whom our influence today is very little. It can mobilise writers, artists, lawyers, doctors, journalists and other sections of the intelligentsia. It can bring all sections of workers together among whom love for the Soviet Union is great and boundless. It can unite the peasants who will have to bear new burdens in case of war and contribute men and money. It can unite the peasants who will have to bear new burdens in case of war and contribute men and money. It can unite the entire youth of our country.

The colossal expenditure of 170 crores of rupees for 'defence' incurred by the Nehru government the colossal burden that this imposes on the common people, ignoring of education, health, housing by the same government, can this not be made an issue to unite the broadest sections of our people against the present government' and against its policies of tying India to the war-chariot of imperialists? Will not this unity be itself a powerful weapon in our struggle for national liberation?

Even the results of the meagre efforts made by us will now show what immense possibilities exist for forging all-in unity of this issue. In Delhi, 30 members of the Indian parliament, all congressmen, have signed the peace appeal. In Punjab, a number of leading congressmen have joined peace committees. In Cawnpore, Raja Ram Shastri, a socialist MCA and a top leader of the UP Socialist Party, has signed the appeal as well as Vasudeo Prasad Misra, secretary of the city Congress committee.

To intensify these efforts, to form broadbased peace committees in all centres, to build a real peace campaign through songs, dramas, handbills, pamphlets, etc., to draw wider and wider sections of our people into the movement—these are our tasks. We shall be taking a big step towards breaking our self-imposed isolation and towards the building of the democratic front by undertaking these tasks in right earnest.

### **Need for a Positive Attitude towards General Election.**

A vital issue which we have ignored completely till now is the issue of the coming general election.

Elected on the basis of a narrow franchise (14 per cent) four years ago and by making false promises, the present legislatures in all provinces as well as in the centre have dittoed all the reactionary policies of the Congress leadership and acted as its rubber stamp. They have ceased to represent the people, they have belied all the expectations that people had, they have broken all their pledges.

Election on the basis of adult franchise was promised long ago, but this is being postponed on the plea of 'technical difficulties'. The truth is that they dare not face the people and want to perpetuate themselves in power. Till now the party has



done nothing to expose the game, it has not given expression to the mass demand for an immediate election, for a free and fair election. It has ignored the issue.

"They will not hold an election. If they do, we shall fight it. But we do not want to create constitutionalist illusions by ourselves giving any slogans"—such has been the attitude of the party. This attitude has nothing to do with the Marxist-Leninist methods of leading the people, of enabling them to overcome their illusions through their own experience, of uniting the people as they are and taking them forward.

Rolls are being prepared in all provinces by government officials in a most dishonest way, leaving out millions of workers and peasants. By dishonest delimitation of constituencies and by undemocratic electoral rules—no proportional representation, etc.—the Congress is trying to ensure that even if election is held, it may be returned to office again. On all this we have said nothing till now. The mass of our people in cities as well as in villages are looking forward to the election and parties like the socialists are using their expectation to strengthen their own position.

To continue our present negative attitude to the issue of election would mean to isolate ourselves even from our supporters, to doom ourselves to a state of political impotence, to hand over the masses to socialists, Congress factions and other reformists. It would mean losing a great opportunity to popularise our programme, to reforge our links with the people, to build the unity of the left parties and to develop a mass movement against the present government.

We must demand that the election must be held without delay and create irresistible opinion for this demand. We must forge unity with left parties and progressive elements that are breaking away from the Congress as also elements in the Congress to formulate a minimum programme, to make concrete proposals for proper delimitations of constituencies and proportional representation, to demand full civil liberties. Without full civil liberties, without the removal of bans on our party (Madras, West Bengal, etc.) and mass organisations, without release of

Political prisoners, the election will be a mockery, this consciousness has to be created. These demands can today get tremendous support from all sections of people.

The way the CC has ignored this issue, the fact that not a line occurs in any CC document on this issue, reveals sharply the blind sectarian outlook that the CC members have acquired, their complete isolation from the masses, their inability to gauge the mass mood. We would remind the CC that according to the Greek leaders, it was a mistake to have ignored the 1946 election when terror was raging in Greece and the country was actually in the midst of a real civil war.

### **Unity of Peasant Masses for Land.**

It is the peasant masses that form the main force of our revolution, it is development of their struggle that is of decisive importance for the victory of our revolution.

With the food crisis deepening and millions facing starvation and death, the issue of agrarian reform has become an issue affecting the life of every section of our people and provides a platform for achieving the broadest unity. Nowhere is the dire results of imperialist-feudal exploitation seen so clearly as in the pauperisation of the peasant masses and the rapid decline of food production. More than ever before the agrarian question has become *the* question before our people.

No class had more faith in the Congress than the peasant. No class has been more cruelly betrayed. Even the most half-hearted 'reform' bills are dragging on in various legislatures for years together and new burdens are being imposed on the peasants in the name of zamindari abolition. The eviction drive is on in every province. While the price of foodstuffs and of every necessity of life rises steeply, the peasant is being looted mercilessly under the government's procurement policies.

Our peasant unions, guided by the old PB which looked at the rich peasant as the main enemy and the middle peasant as a vacillator, failed to unite the peasant masses against these attacks and virtually liquidated themselves in practically all provinces. The All-India Kisan Sabha has ceased to exist as an organisation, its leading committees have not met for years together, the

provincial kisan sabhas exist only on paper in most provinces. In a period when they needed it most, the peasants have been deprived of leadership and guidance.

It is in the rural areas that the government is potentially the weakest, it is here that the decisive battles will develop, it is here that we have to develop partisan areas and liberated areas, and destroy the power of the imperialists bit by bit. The army, recruited mostly from the peasantry, will also start wavering and cracking as the battle extends and grows. It is of utmost necessity therefore that the present weakness of ours in the countryside is overcome and a mass peasant movement built, mass kisan sabhas organised and a strong volunteer organisation created. This alone will create the basis for armed guerilla struggle of the Telangana type.

A strong peasant movement, uniting the peasant masses and covering *a big area*, is essential for the development of guerilla struggle. Without such a movement, armed struggle can be of no other character than sporadic attacks on landlords and moneylenders. Also, if the area is too small, the guerillas will have no place to retreat in face of police and military offensive and will be annihilated.

To build a mass peasant movement, uniting all sections of the peasantry is therefore our immediate task. Special attention has to be paid to the poor peasants and agricultural workers who together form the overwhelming majority of the rural population and who alone can be the core and the driving force of the agrarian struggle and the firmest ally of the workingclass.

Tens of thousands of former active supporters of the Congress in the rural areas can be drawn into the kisan sabhas and their cooperation secured, as well as the cooperation of the workers' and Peasants' Party, of honest elements from the Congress and the Socialist Party, to build a mass kisan movement round the central slogan of 'Land to the Tiller' and for immediate demands like 50 per cent reduction of rent and revenue, no evictions, no feudal levies, fair price, living wage for agricultural labourers, etc. We must formulate a concrete agrarian programme for each province, popularise it extensively among all sections of the

people and forge unity with all democratic elements to build a united kisan sabha and put this programme into effect.

This programme cannot be realised by agitation and propaganda alone. Direct action by the peasant masses—refusal to pay rents and levies, seizure of land, and the defence of such action by armed guerilla struggle will have to become increasingly the main feature of the agrarian movement as the movement rises to higher and higher level, as peasant unity gets strengthened and as their consciousness and militancy grows. The whole movement will have to be firmly led from stage to stage and directed to the path of armed struggle as the situation in different areas matures.

Another task of vital importance is the winning of extensive popular support for the struggle in Telangana and other areas where we wage guerilla struggle.

It is necessary today, taking into account the existing level of our movement and the stage of mass consciousness, that in our propaganda and agitation we adopt a correct attitude and make a correct approach. We have to stress the *defensive* aspect of the Telangana struggle, the *justness of the demands* for which the peasants are fighting, the *conditions* which forced them to take to arms, and the *atrocities* that are being committed by the government forces. We have to rouse our entire people against the government by emphasising these points.

Not that we are organising guerilla struggle to overthrow the government but that the atrocities of the government have compelled the people to take up arms to defend their lives, their property and the honour of their wives, mothers and daughters, their right to the land they till—this basic point must be emphasised again and again and brought home to our people through pamphlets, through visits of democratic nonparty men to these areas, through formulation of concrete demands . etc. To ignore all these tasks on the plea that this is reformism is to doom Telangana to isolation.

The same must be done about every area where we wage such struggle. Not merely guerilla struggle is to be undertaken on the basis of active popular support, active peasant support

and the level of the movement in the area, but support and sympathy for these struggles must be consciously won even from those sections all over the country who do not yet realise the necessity for armed struggle for the overthrow of the government.

The Telangana defence committee must be broadened to include as many nonparty progressive elements as possible. There is no doubt that people can be roused on this issue and their support won if we abandon the present sectarian approach and sectarian methods. It is a matter of shame that while the people of Poland have sent 200 pound for the defence of Telangana comrades, we are unable to collect more than a few thousand rupees for our own people.

On this, as well as on other issues like peace, American aggression in Korea, we have been guilty of underestimation of the volume of democratic opinion in the country, underestimation of the possibilities of mass mobilisation, failure to shed sectarianism and evolve slogans and tactics which will enable us to translate these possibilities into realities. Fear of committing 'reformist deviations', fear of association with the reformists, fear that we are abandoning the 'straight path of Bolshevism' grips our leadership and our ranks.

### **For Unity of all Fighting Classes & all Sections**

Our comrades in the All-India Students' Federation have to take the lead in uniting the student masses and increasing conditions for a single united student organisation. We transformed the AISF into a narrow sect of communist students. From the Students' Federation platform we denounced every congressman as reactionary and went to the length of condemning all left parties and all student organisation other than the AISF. The opposition that the government agency 'National Union of Students\*' has evoked from the Students' Congress organisations in Bengal, UP and Kerala, the united fight of the student masses

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*\* A post script to this document says: Our characterisation of the NUS as a government agency in this note was based on old information. In view of the happenings at the recent session of the NUS at Bombay, our whole approach towards the NUS will have to be changed.*

of Gwalior which won the support of all sections of people, led to student actions in many places, and compelled the government to retreat, the common demand being voiced by students for lowering of fees, for adequate grant to educational institutions, for adequate hostel accommodation, etc.—all these go to show not merely how urgent is the need for unity, but also how great its possibilities. The victory of the Chinese people and the aggression in Korea have profoundly stirred the student masses and heightened their consciousness. Once active participants in all the struggle led by the Congress, the student masses in the last three years have again and again defied bans and staged militant demonstrations. Their actions have played a major role in exposing the real face of the Congress rulers. Not merely for fighting for their own demands, but also on the issue of peace, on the issue of civil liberties, they can be united and led forward.

Besides student actions, the last three years have witnessed big strikes of clerks, office employees, lowergrade government servants and teachers, including the 20,000 strong strike of the district board and municipal teachers of UP. With prices rising rapidly and with large scale retrenchment in all firms and government departments, their conditions are rapidly becoming desperate. These elements can be a powerful ally of the proletariat, they can also be enlisted in the army of fascism. It is a matter of grave concern that due to the absence of workingclass unity and the absence of left unity, which could galvanise them, and due to the scant attention paid by us, thousands of these elements have joined and are joining the openly fascist RSS which declares extermination of Muslims and war again Pakistan as the solution of their problems. It is essential that the workingclass and its party actively champions their demands about adequate wage, housing, education of their children, etc, organises them in masse unions, carries on intensive campaign among them against all reactionary ideologies and wins them over.

We have to interence actively on every issue affecting the life of our people and build their unity for action. We have to formulate concrete demands for the victims of flood and the

Assam earthquake, for the people in famine areas and over and above all, for securing food for our people. Today the issue of food has become one of the main and most important issues for our country. The slogans given in the *Crossroads* of 15 September are fully correct and must be carried out by mass mobilisation and direct action of the people against profiteers and food hoarders—unhoarding their stock and taking possession of it to feed the hungry wherever we are in a position to do so. The government must be made to declare the starvation areas of Bengal, Bihar and Madras as famine areas and take the responsibility of feeding the people. The military budget must be reduced by 50 per cent to import food for the people, especially from the Soviet Union and other democratic countries. The seizure of land by the peasantry in Telangana must be recognised and land handed over to the tiller in all areas to solve the food crisis. We have to organise hunger-marches and demonstrations in unity with other anti-imperialist forces for those demands.

We have to conduct an all-sided exposure campaign against the present government and its policies on all international and national issues—Korea, food, black-marketeering and profiteering, bogus integration and merger of states, shameful deals with foreign interests, starving educational institutions while swelling police budget, living wage, agrarian reform, callous disregard for the refugees, and on each and every issue formulate concrete demands and slogans.

We have to conduct determined struggle against the rightwing socialists, expose their policies concretely and show how they are serving the imperialists and their collaborators, while simultaneously establishing fraternal relations with their ranks who are becoming more and more critical of these policies.

We have to transform our newspapers into real mass newspapers, conducting all-sided exposure of the government, reporting every crime against the people, full stories of corruption, shady deals and of the conflicts inside the congress, establishing correspondence service in every centre so that the papers report not merely our activities but reflect the rising tide of the mass movement against the government and its policies. The papers

can and must become a powerful levers for building left unity, democratic unity of the people and unity of the workingclass. The very fact that this is a period of growing radicalisation and the circulation of our papers has not merely not increased, but has in many cases gone down, shows how we have failed to run them properly.

We have to create mass literature in indian languages to meet the ever-growing demand for information about the Soviet Union, about People's China, about the people's democracies, about events and happenings in our own country and abroad. How criminally we have failed in this can be seen from the fact that we closed down the *Indo-Soviet journal*, our FSU activities are at a standstill and we have produced practically nothing in indian languages about China and Vietnam and even about Korea. The need is for cheaply-priced pamphlets, streams of pamphlets and their wide sale.

We have to undertake immediate work among the refugees, formulate demands about their resettlement and education of their children, collect funds for their needs. We have to defeat the efforts of communalist reactionaries to use their miseries for their own ends.

We have to support actively the demand for linguistic provinces and forge unity with the congress and other elements for this purpose. We have to get rid of the idea that everyone connected with the congress is a counter-revolutionary. on the contrary every effort must be made to draw congressmen and those breaking away from the Congress into the movement for peace, for friendship with the Soviet Union and people's China, for food, for civil liberties, etc.

We have to popularise the Soviet Union and its achievements on the most extensive scale and among all sections of our people. The FSU must be made a really broad movement and the *Indo-Soviet Journal* must be restarted and a mass drive launched for the selling of literature on the Soviet Union. Also articles from the *people's China* must be translated and brought out in pamphlet form in all languages.



We must also formulate concrete demands affecting the life of the soldiers and armed forces in general and make them a part of our platform.

Inevitably the forms of struggle will vary from place to place, depending on the nature of the issue, the degree of people's unity. For example, in one place we may be able to assert the right to hold meetings by militant defiance of bans and wrest civil liberties temporarily, at another we may not be able to do anything more than a peaceful protest. At one place we may be able to unearth the hoarded stock and distribute foodgrains among the people, at another we may have to adopt the methods of demonstration alone. Due to the very nature of the period however and due to the growing radicalisation of the masses, resort to higher and higher forms of struggle will be both necessary and possible.

We have stated earlier that armed struggle must increasingly become the main form of our struggle, that this struggle must be spread all over the country as the situation matures and our own strength grows ..\*

The imperialists, we must never forget are in a desperate situation and will adopt desperate measures to maintain themselves in power. While not resigning ourselves to the inevitability of fascism, while fighting determinedly to win civil liberties, while making full use of all legal possibilities, we must never forget the nature of the period. Never again we must allow ourselves to be taken by surprise as we were after the second party congress. Every measure must be taken to keep unexposed a large part of the cadres of the party, especially the new recruits. The underground organisational and technical apparatus has to be strengthened a hundredfold in order that the party may function, may maintain its links with the masses and lead them even in the midst of worst terror. While it is stupid to reduce the question of struggle against the government to merely a question of technique and military tactics, we must never forget also that in a colonial country it would be suicidal to *ignore* the tremendous importance of these factors. The struggle to build the united front of the people

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\* There is a defect in the cycloed manuscript and some lines seem to be missing

itself demands that our links with the masses are maintained in all situations, that we are able to create a force to defend the people in face of attacks from the enemy, that we are able to deliver repeated blows against the enemy, basing ourselves on active mass support and on the rising mass movement.

This is where we differ from those who would liquidate all militant struggles today and who visualise a period of peaceful preparation ahead.

We maintain that the *immediate task* before the party in the *greater part of the country* is to develop a mass movement, create mass organisation and build mass unity, which alone would create the basis for real armed struggle.

This is where we differ from the present CC line which, as we have said, puts the cart before the horse by advancing guerrilla war all over the country.

The perspective of armed struggle will be realised only if we abandon all complacency, all illusions both of a reformist and of a revolutionary romantist nature, only if we mobilise and lead the masses in their immediate battles and build their unity and their organisation.

On every occasion, on every issue and in every place, the Communist party has to come out as the party of people's unity and people's struggle, as the builder, organiser and champion of the people's battles. We have to transform the people's hatred against the government and their urge for a new life into a mass movement to end the present regime and establish real freedom and democracy. We have to unite all the little streams of opposition to the government into one mighty torrent, in to the revolutionary struggle for a people's democracy.

### **For a Mass party**

We have formulated some of the immediate tasks facing the party. But in the forefront of all task stands the task of reunifying and rebuilding the party itself, the task of transforming it into a mass party. The nature of the period we are passing through, the nature of the period ahead, makes this our supreme task.

The Bombay textile strike has galvanised the workingclass all over the country. The sympathetic strikes in Calcutta, Cawnpore and other centers, the colliery workers' strike in Bihar, the militant strike in Indore, show that a big strike wave is rising again. Clashes are being reported from rural areas. Masses of hungry people have already in some areas taken possession of profiteers' hoards. Despite the lack of unity, lack of leadership, lack of organisation, the people are moving into action spontaneously, driven by hunger, driven by intolerable conditions of life. Wherever one goes, one sees clear indications of the coming storm.

The crisis is maturing fast. Big upheavals, gigantic battles are ahead.

But as the history of our national movement has proved again and again, the upsurge, no matter how powerful, will spend itself in a series of unorganised clashes, dissipate its strength in uncoordinated battles and will be ultimately betrayed and crushed unless the party has *already* entrenched itself in the masses, has forged its links with them and has a clear perspective. We shall be taken by surprise by the volume and force of the avalanche, overwhelmed by the political and organisational tasks that will face us and be compelled to trail behind the events if we do not act correctly right now, win the leadership of the masses today, unite them through a correct mass policy round our banner and transform ourselves into a mass party.

We have to discard the ridiculous notion that even if we remain isolated from the masses today, they will flock round our banner 'when the time comes' because by then all other parties will have discredited themselves and we shall appear before the people as the only revolutionary party. We have to realise that if we do not win the leadership of the masses *today* by a correct mass policy, by leadership of day-to-day battles and by patiently building up mass organisations and a mass party, we shall be able to do nothing in the coming period.

Only a mass party can lead the mass upsurge. Only a mass party can build people's unity. Only a mass party can organise

armed struggle on a big scale and in an effective manner. This is the key lesson we have to learn from the glorious history of the Chinese revolution.

As Dimitrov said in his historic report at the seventh world congress of the of the Comintern: "In the struggle for the establishment of the united front, the importance of the leading role of the communist party increases extra-ordinarily. Only the Communist Party is at bottom the initiator, the organiser and the driving force of the united front of the working class.

"The communist parties can ensure the mobilisation of the masses of toilers for a united struggle against the offensive of fascism and the offensive of capital *only if they strengthen their own ranks in every respect*, if they develop their initiative, pursue a marxist - Leninist policy and apply correct flexible tactics, which take into account the concrete situation and the alignment of class forces."

These words of Dimitrov not merely retain their validity to this day, they are of special significance for us in view of the situation in our country and the state of our party.

Dimitrov was ignored by the old PB. The party for them was merely a *shock-brigade* and not the vanguard of the masses, not the leader, the organiser and the driving force of the united front against the imperialists. When 'analysing' the situation, they forgot that the party is the most vital factors in the 'situation' itself; its strength, its influence, its striking power the decisive force that would determine the fate of the whole battle.

Party-building has always been the task most neglected by us. Even when we led big mass battles all over the country, we could not draw more than a minute fraction of them into the party. Thousands of militant workers and peasant thrown up by every struggle, men with initiative, capacity for leadership, courage and spirit of self sacrifice were drawn towards the party, but could not be enlisted in the party and absorbed. The party therefore always suffered from lack of cadres.

One of the basic reasons for this is our failure to conduct *intensive political education* among our cadres, supporters and sympathisers. Barring Andhra, and to a certain extent Bengal,

the work of party education has never been even seriously undertaken.

Study of classics, completely ignored in the period of reformism, is of course a key factor in raising the level of consciousness of cadres. But that by itself is not enough. We have to study intensively the history of our own struggles, of the battles led by us, of mass fights that have taken place in our own country. We have to draw lesson from these struggles. Then only ranks can be educated and can acquire experience.

Our trade-union cadres today know nothing except of the struggles in which they have been direct participants. They know nothing of the great strikes of Bombay, Calcutta and other centres of the past and their lessons. We have not produced any literature on the trade-union movement in India. We have not produced the history of the great tebhaga battle, the north malabar peasant movement, the great fights in Andhra and the uprising in Telangana. The priceless lesson of these movements, lessons learned in the battlefield itself, have not been made part of the consciousness of the whole party but have remained confined only to the actual participants, and that too in a vague general way. Comrades in one centre have learned nothing from the struggles of another centre. New cadres have had to start work every time afresh, without the guidance that the rich experience of the past can supply. We seldom review the movements of our people and even when we do—the reports on the peace movement, the workingclass and student movement in the *Communist*—they are full of vague generalisations, gross exaggeration and high-sounding phrases and therefore do not teach anything.

A break has to be made with all this, the *Communist* our theoretical organ, has to be conducted not merely on the basis of reprints of international articles, but has to review the situation in our own country and the actual progress of our own movement. Then only can it teach our cadres. Also we have to prepare reports and reviews of our past struggles. Without this we shall never be able to train our cadres.

The old PB not merely ignored the task of building the party. It followed a policy of systematically smashing it up. It poisoned

the whole innerparty atmosphere and destroyed all mutual confidence. It shattered the moral fabric of the party by demagoguery by lies and by terror.

This is where we have to start from.

We have made a number of suggestions in our note on the "Crisis in our Party" and we request the CC to seriously consider them. We feel that the appointment of control commissions in all provinces to review the cases of comrades against whom action was taken by the PB is a matter of vital importance. The question is not whether the CC is convinced about the correctness and justice of any action. The task is to convince all comrades and sympathisers that a clean break is being made with the past methods. The task is one of restoring confidence and discipline.

Abstract appeals for unity, for discipline and referring to clauses of the party constitution, these will not achieve the purpose of restoring confidence and reunifying the party. The manner in which the 'reconstitution' of the CC was done, the inclusion in the new CC at least of two of the old CC comrades guilty of worst mistakes and even crimes, the failure to take suitable action against the authors of the Titoite-Turkish terror regime inside the party, the 'reorganisation' of provincial committees with only those who agree with the CC's interpretation of the Cominform article, the decision to call a plenum of the CC's nominees—these are not steps which help in creating confidence. To this day the CC has not given the party its analysis of the political situation in the country or a political-organisational report and yet it wants comrades in all committees to 'unreservedly accept' the new line!

The decision of the PB to recommend to the CC that a party congress should be called is welcome. This decision should have been taken long ago. We have already expressed the opinion that the congress should be preceded by provincial conferences—conferences convened on the basis of a concrete political-organisational report in each province and not merely to discuss the "CC letter".

In order that the party congress may really unify the party and not be the starting point for renewed innerparty struggle, the following steps must be taken *immediately*:

(1) A concrete analysis of the political situation in our country must be made, a tactical line on its basis worked out and placed before the comrades for discussion.

(2) No attempt should be made to implement the line given in the "CC Letter", which should be withdrawn.

(3) Immediate slogans must be given for rebuilding trade-union unity, kisan unity, student unity and for developing a mass movement on the issues facing the people—Korea, peace, civil liberties, Telangana, food, agrarian reform, minimum wage, elections, etc.

(4) Ranadive and Adhikari must be suspended from the party, the CC members from Bengal and Maharashtra removed from the CC and also the comrades mainly responsible for the mistakes for the last two and half years from PCs.

(5) Control commissions must be appointed in all provinces to review the cases *rapidly* in order to enable the largest number of comrades to take part in the party conferences and congress. All wrong decisions of the old PB and other committees must be openly withdrawn immediately to restore confidence and to create a healthy atmosphere inside the party. No attempt must be made to minimise the crimes and mistakes of leading comrades as has been done in the "Organisational Report".

(6) The leaders of the international communist movement must be informed about the serious situation in the party. Their fraternal assistance must be sought at once for an authoritative interpretation of the Cominform article and the tasks facing the party in India.

Only the immediate undertaking of these tasks will help us to solve the crisis and create the basis for successful convening of the party congress.

We have already wasted eight months. The situation brooks no delay. Any further drift will cause disaster.

We hope the CC will pay serious attention to the criticism we have made and to the proposals we have placed before it. We are confident that if we take the correct steps at once, we can undo the harm caused by the last two and a half years' policies with the utmost rapidity, unify our class and lead our people in the battle for democracy and freedom.

The situation, we repeat, brooks no delay. Reeling under the blows of the heroic Korean people, the imperialists have become more desperate and are striving to spread the flames of war. Inside India, the forces of counterrevolution are consolidating their ranks. the election of the arch-reactionary and communalist Tandon to the presidentship of the Congress is an ominous pointer. It presages acceleration of the drive towards fascism, increasing resort to communal disruption and all-out offensive against the forces of revolution.

We have to act and act at once. The forces of the people are immense. But they have to be unified, they have to be consolidated, they have to be led firmly. Our party and our party alone can fulfil this task.



# **Indian People's Democratic Revolution And The Communist Party of India \***

## *New Strategy Based On the New Alignment Of Class Forces*

An objective economic and political analysis of the new class alignment of forces after the Mountbatten award reveals that the imperialists, the native big business, the feudal princes and landlord class stand in one camp and opposing it stand the working class, the peasantry, the pettybourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie. The former bloc is interested in the maintenance of the present colonial slave order of exploitation and is completely hostile to the people's democratic revolution, while the latter is interested in complete national independence and people's democracy.

The place and the role of each class that is interested in the people's democratic revolution is naturally determined by the objective economic position that each of them occupies in the existing social set up, i.e. relations of social production. Keeping this in view, it is necessary to state which class or classes form the revolutionary force and their relative significance in the revolution.

The proletariat as the most advanced class of modern society is a thoroughgoing revolutionary class. The working class, by the very position it occupies in production, is bound to be and capable of organising itself quickly and efficiently to fight effectively and consistently for democracy and socialism.

The Indian proletariat is *numerically* the strongest of all the semicolonial and colonial countries of the world. It has entered the political arena actively decades ago and has been playing all

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*\* A draft policy statement was issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI on November 15, 1950. The chapters 5, 6, 7 and first part of chapter 8 of this document dealing with strategy and tactics are given here*

along a very important role in the struggle for freedom and national independence. It is also an organised and politically conscious force.

The Indian proletariat, a great part of which has been very closely connected and has natural affinity with the mass of the peasantry, finds it easy to form a close alliance with them and hence best suited to lead the agrarian revolution—the axis of the colonial revolution.

On the top of all, the Indian proletariat, which is oppressed and crushed by the imperialists, the native big bourgeoisie and the feudal landlords, is vitally interested in and quite capable of a resolute and thoroughgoing revolutionary struggle against this combine. The Indian working class is fully aware that its liberation is inseparable from national liberation and no basic improvement of its social status and working conditions can be achieved without first and foremost winning genuine national independence and people's democracy.

Hence the proletariat, with the Communist Party at its head as its vanguard and organised detachment, is alone the most determined and devoted fighting force for national liberation and is historically destined to be the leader of this struggle for national and real independence.

Besides the working class, the peasantry constitutes the largest revolutionary class in the people's democratic front. The predominance of oppressive feudal and semifeudal relations in the countryside, the imperialist and monopolist stranglehold on the agrarian economy make the peasantry vitally interested in the agrarian revolution—the axis of the colonial revolution. Therefore the peasantry represents the main force of the agrarian revolution, which is the main and chief content of the present phase of the people's democratic revolution.

It is evident that feudal and semifeudal relations on land still continue to dominate our rural economy, acting as a powerful obstacle for the capitalist development of the country, as a consequence of which the class differentiation of the peasantry is also proceeding at a comparatively slow rate. Nevertheless it is to be noted that imperialism has included the Indian village in

the system of capitalism, with its taxation, trade apparatus, etc., and capitalist relations have developed and are still in the process of development. But it must be made clear that this development of capitalism and capitalist relations have their own distinct features, different from those of the independent and free capitalist countries. The capitalism that has so far developed and is developing in the typically colonial land of ours, does not smash the pre-capitalist and feudal forms of bondage and exploitation of the peasantry but only gives the latter a monetary expression which worsens still more the conditions of the peasantry; this capitalism adds new burdens on the peasant masses of our country without removing any of the old burdens of feudal and semi feudal forms of exploitation.

Failure to understand this characteristic feature of colonial capitalism has led our party in the past to commit serious mistakes and would land us in future in many erroneous conclusions and deviations if we do not draw proper lessons from the past. The right-opportunist school of thought refused to take note of the development of capitalism in our countryside and the painful class differentiation that has been taking place among the peasantry. It proceeded under the dogmatic assertion that under the imperialist rule and feudal and semi feudal fetters on land, capitalism in the countryside had not at all developed and class differentiation among the peasantry had not taken place. It considered the entire peasantry as still a homogeneous mass and failed to separately organise agricultural labour and lead their wage struggles etc. and allowed the rich peasant sections to entrench in the leadership of the kisan movement, resulting in paralysation and sabotage of the progress of the agrarian revolution.

The left-sectarian school of thought swung to the other opposite end and dogmatically asserted that capitalist development in our agriculture is nothing different from the capitalism of any developed, independent, capitalist country. It had erroneously asserted that capitalism in our agriculture which had 'already developed' and 'fast developing' had smashed the domination of the pre-capitalist and feudal relations and that

capitalist relations have become dominant. As a result the rich peasant was looked upon as the 'spearhead of counter-revolution' and capitalist and feudal landlordism was given a clean bill; the agrarian revolution was not considered as mainly anti-feudal and anti-landlord but principally as anticapitalist and antirich peasant. It had failed to take note of the essentially different conditions of our colonial agricultural workers from those of the developed capitalist countries stressed exclusively on the wage-demands of the agricultural workers and deliberately neglected the united fight of the peasantry against the feudal and semifeudal bondage for land etc. Thus it led to disruption of the revolutionary peasant front and sabotaged the agrarian revolution.

We have to fight these two deviations and correctly understand that, in spite of the developed and developing capitalism and capitalist relations in the countryside, feudal relations are still prevailing and the anti-feudal agrarian revolution with the slogan of land to the tiller stands as the main and immediate task before the Indian democratic revolution.

Nonetheless the peasantry does no longer represent a homogeneous mass and class differentiation has taken place, based on the developing market relations leading to the formation of different groups such as agricultural worker, poor peasant, the middle peasant and a narrow stratum of rich peasantry. Quite in consonance with this class differentiation, the agricultural worker, who has neither land at all or possesses a tiny plot nor implements of production, with no guarantee of employment for a greater part of the year in the disintegrating sector of agrarian economy and holding no promises of being absorbed by the country's industrial sector which is fettered and restricted by imperialist economy, groaning under all kinds of capitalist and pre-capitalist forms of exploitation, and slowly dying from want and privation, famine and disease, is the typical phenomenon of the Indian village. These agricultural workers, together with the poor peasantry and tenant cultivators, who are equally subjected to ruthless feudal and semifeudal as well as capitalist forms of exploitation, form the biggest single group which can be the firm

ally of the proletariat in the people's democratic revolution and capable of acting as the spearhead of agrarian revolution.

The middle peasantry in the countryside is another revolutionary group which either as tenants or owners suffer both at the hands of usury-capital, and feudal and semifeudal land relations. The majority of this group groaning under the terrible system of exploitation has little chance of prosperous living and is steadily and slowly getting reduced into the stratum of the poor peasantry. It is only a small section of them that has some chance in certain conditions of growing into rich peasant status. The middle peasantry in general does not exploit others though a section amongst them may be hiring agricultural labourers and lending out small amount of credits etc. On the other hand, this group as a whole is exploited by imperialism, feudalism and native big-bourgeoisie and is capable of resolutely taking part in the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution. Therefore the entire middle peasantry forms a good revolutionary force and constitutes a reliable ally of the proletariat. The importance of this ally is not only confined to this stage of revolution but also to the future socialist stage.

Next comes the rich peasantry. This section too is in general interested in the slogan of 'abolition of landlordism' and 'land to the tiller'. It is possible to carry this section also in the present stage of our revolution which is essentially anti-feudal, anti-imperialist and anti-monopolist.

The proletariat, in its bid for an alliance with this section in the people's democratic revolution, must bear in mind all its characteristics and make a correct approach. Firstly, this class is, by its very nature, orientated towards capitalism and exploitation. Secondly, the rich peasant is an exploiter of wage-labour, notwithstanding the manual labour he performs on his farm. Thirdly, a certain section of the rich peasantry is also in the habit of practising usury, rackrenting and other accompanying feudal and semifeudal forms of exploitation. These characteristics would determine the nature of the fight they put up against the feudal, landlord relations and imperialism, their vacillations and opposition, sometimes in the case of certain sections openly lining

up with the present counter-revolutionary ruling clique. The fact that the rich peasantry in general is interested in the slogan of land to the tiller does not warrant the proletariat to forget that this section, as an exploiter of the agricultural labour, is hostilely disposed to the wage struggle of the agricultural proletariat. These characteristics of the rich peasant—that of his hostile disposition to the struggles of the wage-worker and his orientation to the capitalist class as the peasant bourgeoisie and in certain cases, in some degree or other, his method of feudal exploitation would determine his conduct in the revolutionary camp. It is dangerous to allow this group and its representatives to entrench themselves in positions of authority in the revolutionary kisan movement, i.e. the peasant committees, land committees and the village people's committees etc. without ensuring in them a preponderance of the toiling peasantry. The proletariat and the Communist Party, while on one hand, allying with the rich peasantry in the fight against landlords and imperialism, must constantly expose before the peasant masses its vacillating role and free them from its political influence.

Another important factor to be taken note of, while approaching the question of the rich peasantry, is that a certain section of it, however numerically small, comes mainly under the category of feudal exploiters. Such rich peasants, the greater of whose total income is derived from rackrenting, usury and trading and who have got strong social and political links with feudal and semifeudal landlord class, are not to be considered as allies. The question however is not to be decided merely by the fact that they are, in some measure or other, connected with feudal exploitation—because in the typically backward colonial economy of our country, such connections in some small degree with feudal exploitation are observed in greater number of the rich peasants and to some extent in a section of the middle peasantry also—but by the fact of the predominance of feudal exploitation and their opposition to the revolution.

The people's democratic revolution, in the stage of the anti-imperialist, anti-big business and anti-feudal agrarian struggle, does not set itself the task of confiscating and distributing the

lands of the rich peasantry, that leads to the liquidation of the rich peasant institution. The question of confiscation and distribution arises with regard to those individual elements who play the role of leaders and organisers of the butcher gangs of imperialist and feudal reaction. Such is the perspective of the alliance with the rich peasantry in the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal agrarian revolution.

After the peasantry comes the various categories of the petty-bourgeoisie. It comprises of handicraftsmen, small producers, students, teachers, low-paid employees, intellectuals, free professionals and the urban poor. All these sections have been oppressed by the present ruling bloc of imperialism, big bourgeoisie and feudal landlords. They are acutely hit by the soaring rise in prices, exorbitant house-rent, constantly menacing threat of unemployment, lack of educational facilities, low salaries and all types of social insecurity under the present order and are genuinely interested in the overthrow of the present ruling clique and the establishment of genuine democratic order. Hence the petty-bourgeoisie is one of the important forces of the revolution and a reliable ally of the proletariat. The revolutionary energy that this class has displayed in numerous and heroic anti-imperialist struggles in the recent past also reveals its revolutionary potentialities in the struggle for national liberation.

It is only under the leadership of the proletariat that the petty-bourgeoisie can secure its emancipation. The proletariat and the Communist Party have to correctly approach each section of this class, organise it and lead it to the revolution.

And lastly, comes the question of the middle bourgeoisie. The middle bourgeoisie is that section which has either fewer links or no links with imperialists and the big bourgeoisie which has not only politically formed a bloc with imperialists but also entered into economic deals through largescale fusion of its capital. The middle bourgeoisie is *mainly* dependant on its own medium or small industries or business concerns and the *major* part of whose income is derived from these concerns—but not from either landlord exploitation or shares in the imperialist concerns and the Indo-British joint companies. The middle

bourgeoisie suffers from the cut-throat competition of the imperialists and monopoly capital and does not share political power with them.

In certain circumstances and to a certain extent, this group of middle bourgeoisie, under the basically colonial character of our economy and political setup, is capable of playing a revolutionary role. Imperialism, native monopoly capital and feudalism, whom the people's democracy sets as its main and immediate target of attack are also in a way the enemies of this section. The cut-throat imperialist competition for markets and the stranglehold of feudal-agrarian relations that impede the development of the home market and cripple it, not only stand in the way of advancement of this class but also become a menace threatening its existence.

Although this section suffered under the serious illusion of bettering its lot under the present order and basically supported the anti-communist and anti-people repressive policies of the reactionary rulers in the first period after 15 August, the daily increasing blows of the deepening economic crisis are shattering its hope and an increasing discontent is also witnessed. The growing discontent and disillusionment with the devastating policies of the ruling clique on the one hand and the increasing confidence and faith roused by the fighting proletariat and its allies in the democratic front on the other may be able to win it for the people's democratic front. The fight for this ally has to be carried on on two fronts. The proletariat and the Communist Party, while on the one hand unhesitatingly championing its just demands against imperialism and monopoly capital and defending the institution of middle capital, wherever the power of people's democracy is set up, would be vigilant on the other to fight to foil its attempts to shift the burden of the crisis on to the shoulders of the working people.

The middle bourgeoisie which is not opposed to an objectively interested in the agrarian revolution, as it will facilitate the freer supply of raw materials to its industry and provide a stable home market, is also in favour of the formation of linguistic provinces and the self-determination of various nationalities who are today denied their just rights by foreign imperialism and its ally, chiefly



Gujarati-Marwari monopoly capital. The decisive lead of the proletariat in carrying out the agrarian revolution and all the national-liberation struggles of the oppressed nationalities in India can be an additional factor by which this section can be swung over to the democratic front.

Before we close this question of the middle bourgeoisie we would like to point out that it is erroneous to characterise the entire bourgeoisie, excluding the strictly defined monopoly sections, as the middle bourgeoisie. We observe in our country the phenomenon of the feudal and landlord elements entering into the field of industry and commerce by starting medium and small-scale enterprises such as small rice-mills, oil-mills, foundries and workshops and such other concerns. These industries or business concerns are only of an auxiliary nature for their main incomes which they derive chiefly from landlordism, usury and such other feudal and semifeudal exploitation. These groups, the greater part of whose income is from land and only a small part from their small and medium industrial and commercial concerns, are to be characterised as mainly the landlord bourgeoisie, but not the middle bourgeoisie, whom we speak of as our ally. Although these sections too express some sort of concern and anxiety at the disintegration of their small-scale enterprises under the impact of the crisis, they are decidedly hostile to the agrarian revolution as it would adversely affect the major portion of their ill-gotten incomes and hence can never play a revolutionary role and therefore cannot be treated as allies in the democratic revolution.

Similarly there are sections of the bourgeoisie in different provinces who do not come under the strict definition of monopolists and who have industrial and business concerns as their main source of income, but who are today in the governmental power as satellites of the present ruling bloc, are in different provinces in close cooperation with the landlord bourgeoisie mentioned above. These two sections are hostile to the revolution.

But in those national territories where the agrarian revolution has not assumed serious proportions as to immediately threaten them and where the proletariat has not yet seriously posed for

its hegemony over the movement for self-determination of nationalities, it may be still discernible that these sections also voice some opposition to the present ruling bloc—particularly on the issue of formation of linguistic provinces. This opposition is not a revolutionary opposition but only a reformist, compromising and extremely vacillating one, for they demand only linguistic provinces and not full self-determination, with the right to secede. The fact that they have acquiesced in the state-merger schemes of Sardar Patel, denying the liquidation of princely states and the right of those people to join their respective national homelands and the fact that they are opposed to all active worker and peasant democratic movements on their territories, the growth and strength and success of which alone would win the real national unification and self-determination of those peoples, would only go to prove their basically reactionary character. Hence no question of a strategical alliance with these sections does arise.

The proletariat and the Communist Party have to head this current of struggle for self-determination of nationalities, exposing and isolating the treacherous reformist bourgeois leadership and dislodging it from the honourable position of leadership over these movements, and thus tear away the petty-bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie from the fold of the reactionary and reformist bourgeoisie, and assert the hegemony of the working class over these movements. At the same time, the proletariat will also utilise, in furtherance of the democratic revolution, all the fissures and conflicts that arise on this issue between these sections and all-India big bourgeoisie, without entertaining in the least any illusions of a united front with them in the struggle for genuine national independence and people's democracy.

Such is the alliance of class forces in India today and such are the democratic classes and groups, as described above, that stand ranged against the anti-national alliance of the imperialists, native big business and feudal landlord classes; such is the key task of the people's democratic front to overthrow this reactionary ruling class and establish a people's democracy.

The basic programme on which all these anti-imperialist classes can be mobilised in the people's democratic front is as follows :

(1) Complete national independence, severance from the British Commonwealth and the Anglo-American reactionary warbloc, and the establishment of close economic, political and cultural ties with genuinely democratic countries and above all with the Soviet Union and Chinese People's Republic.

(2) Scrapping the slave constitution and repealing all repressive laws enforced on the people by the present reactionary ruling bloc, and the framing a people's democratic constitution by a constituent assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise for men and women above 18 years of age, guaranteeing full freedom, democracy and civil liberties to the people irrespective of sex, community and nationality.

(3) Establishment of a Union of People's Democratic Republics, its government representing all the anti-imperialist classes, i.e. workers, peasants, petty-bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie.

(4) Abolition of the princely states, formation of the united homelands of different nations and nationalities, national unification on the principle of the right of self-determination of nations and nationalities living in the sub-continent of India.

(5) Abolition of landlordism without compensation and distribution of land to the tillers of the soil.

(6) Confiscation of all foreign capital and nationalisation of all key and largescale industries.

(7) 7-hour day, living wage, guarantee of employment, old age pensions etc. for the working class.

(8) Protection of the rights of national, religious and other minorities and tribal peoples.

(9) Organisation of a people's liberation army to win the revolution and to defend the people's democratic order and the establishment of the right of the people to bear arms.

This programme cannot be implemented as long as the present ruling bloc remains in power. It can be defeated and vanquished by forging a fighting people's democratic front of all the anti-

imperialist revolutionary forces; secondly, the people's democratic front has to be the front of armed struggle without which the counter-revolution that is armed to the teeth can never be defeated; and thirdly, the armed struggle, and the people's democratic front to conduct it, can succeed in attaining its objective only under the firm guidance of the proletariat and the Communist Party.

Failure to realise any of the above basic truths and tasks is to nourish false illusions fraught with serious dangers both for the realisation of the day-to-day demands of the people and the fulfilment of the programme of the democratic front.

Before dealing with each of the three basic concepts of the political line in detail we must have a clear grasp of the interrelation between these three.

### **The Interrelation Between the United Front, Armed Struggle and the Party**

The question of united front (strategy), armed struggle (main tactic of struggle) and the party (proletarian hegemony) are the three fundamental questions of the people's democratic revolution in India. A correct understanding of each one of them and their interrelation, and a correct solution for each one of them alone, in the final analysis, decide the success or otherwise of the revolution.

These three problems form a component part of the political line of the party. If we approach any of these problems in isolation, it would get us nowhere near the success of our political line. Each of them in a way is dependent upon the other and hence interdependent. The stronger the party is, the more effectively the arms struggle is carried on, the quicker the united front can be built; the wider and deeper the armed struggle grows, the stronger united front becomes, the riper would be the conditions congenial for building of a mass party; the greater the united front is consolidated, the bigger the scope for a mass party becomes, the more intensively and extensively grows the armed struggle leading to the final phase of the war of liberation.

This truth is not only borne out by the history of the world revolutionary proletarian movement but also can be drawn from

our own past history. The Communist Party of India, when it started as a small group, adopted propaganda and agitation as the main forms of struggle and widened its influence among workers in particular and people in general. In the next stage, it had to adopt the economic and political strikes, meetings and demonstrations as the main form of struggle which not only enabled the party to grow in strength but also brought into existence an embryonic united front of workers, peasants and other democratic classes, groups and individuals. This independent strength and mobilisation of the revolutionary forces under the leadership of the party have seriously challenged imperialism and its lackeys who stooped to armed retaliation, failing in their usual normal forms of repression. The party and the revolutionary forces that were already mobilised under it would be able to advance in such a situation by adopting a suitable form of struggle, i.e. armed resistance as the principal form. It is thus the growth of the party and the growth of the united front are intimately connected with the proper forms of struggle the party adopts and diligently decides which form under which circumstances becomes the principal form. One of the reasons for our failure in the post-war period to successfully advance the revolutionary movement for national liberation is due to missing the main form of struggle, though the bungling in class strategy by right-opportunism and left-sectarianism is also equally responsible. It is not our failure to lead the economic-political strikes and demonstrations and peasants struggles etc. but the failure to realise, that the advanced stage of the revolution and in its turn the counter-revolution demand a far higher form of struggle to successfully defend the revolutionary movement, that is at the root of our mistake in choosing forms of struggle.

Thus it is clear that to the extent the party could understand and approach each of these problems, namely, the united front, the principal and subsidiary forms of struggle and party building on the one hand and their interrelation on the other, to that extent only the revolution in general and the united front, principal and subsidiary forms of struggles, and party-building, in particular, have advanced or otherwise. The lack of proper understanding

and correct approach to each of the above-discussed issues and their interrelation has hindered the consolidation, growth and bolshevisation of the party, has disrupted the people's unity already built under its leadership, not to speak of a wider united front and has also narrowed the scope and sweep of the armed guerilla war, with the net result of paralysing the growth of national-liberation struggle.

It is a utopian idea to think that a nationwide united front is the first requisite for starting armed guerilla struggle or that a countrywide, strong, mass communist party is a precondition for the arms struggle. To say so is to miss the essence of the whole political line with a mechanical and compartmental approach. Either the proletariat and the party with its present strength must learn to combine these three component parts of the political line, judiciously apply to the concrete conditions and advance or make a mechanical approach to each of these problems in separation and attempt to push through one of the three in isolation to the other, which is fraught with the danger of liquidating the revolution.

### **Proletarian Hegemony And The Role Of The Party**

In the foregoing section the interrelation of the three component parts of the political line has been briefly stated. Now let us take up one by one each of these questions and discuss in brief the correct concept and the task in relation to each of these three. For the convenience of discussion, we take up the question of the party first, of armed struggle next and the people's democratic front last.

It is already pointed out in the foregoing pages how the question of proletarian hegemony is an invisible part of the struggle for national independence and democracy. The struggle of the Indian working class for its hegemony over the national-liberation movement has been a very stubborn struggle of nearly two decades which, until the open and final desertion of the national big bourgeoisie and liberal landlord classes as represented by the Congress leadership to the camp of imperialism, has not met with complete success. The CC is aware that this was due primarily to the following reasons: *firstly*, the working class had

to face “such an exceedingly powerful opponent in the person of British imperialism, who, with all the means at its disposal, crushed and disrupted the national-liberation movement” by employing ruthless and body terror and all kinds of repressive measures on the one hand, and on the other, by utilising the national reformism preached and practised by the Congress leadership; *secondly*, the working class had to confront the bourgeois Congress leadership which had entrenched itself in the leadership of national-liberation movement decades earlier before the organised Indian proletariat and the Communist Party had seen the light of the day, preaching worst national reformism, exploiting and fanning rabid religious fanaticism, communalism and all sorts of Gandhian revivalist ideas; and *thirdly*, the ideological and theoretical immaturity of the Communist Party, which expressed itself in practising the right-opportunist and nationalistic mistakes, in some measure or other, throughout the period of 1935-48, failed to isolate and dislodge the national-reformist leadership of the big bourgeoisie from the hegemony of the national-liberation movement.

All the same considerable strengthening of the working class and the Communist Party during this time—particularly in the period of anti-fascist war because of the party’s basically correct attitude to war and its effective participation in leading all the active, militant mass struggles in the post-war period in the face of increasing discouragement, opposition and desertion by the Congress leadership had helped the struggle for proletarian hegemony to crystallise in a stronger and increasing way. The final betrayal of the anti-imperialist people’s movement by the big bourgeoisie had objectively placed the Indian working class at the hegemony of the national-liberation movement.

Proletarian hegemony in the national-liberation movement is expressed principally in the ideological, political and organisational leadership over its allied classes.

Proletarian hegemony can be established, consolidated and advanced by the proletariat taking initiative to participate, organise and lead all the struggles of the allied classes, primarily the peasantry, beginning with the partial struggles for their demands, culminating in the final struggle for state power.

The organisation, consolidation and the strengthening of the Communist Party is an essential condition, and an indispensable factor for the way for the hegemony of the proletariat to be prepared and finally achieved.

It follows that for organising a strong people's democratic front under proletarian hegemony for a successful conclusion of the democratic revolution, the building up of a strong and well organised Communist Party becomes the prime task of the proletariat, drawing into the parties ranks all the advanced elements of the progressive revolutionary-democratic courses in the country; without such a party to organise and lead a united front of armed struggle, the final victory in the war of liberation is unthinkable.

To build a mass party capable of leading the united front of armed struggle to complete victory in the revolution, it is absolutely necessary to examine broadly how the successive periods of reformism and sectarianism had affected the party so that we may assess the present organisational situation of the party and chalk out the future tasks.

The right-reformist deviation had dominated the party for a pretty long time of more than 10 years till the second party congress. It had its own social-democratic organisational methods. The right-reformist politics as well as its organisational principles and methods that were slowly and steadily introduced in small doses had culminated by the time of the second party congress in the following:

(a) In the greater part of the party organisation, the cell system was abolished and in its place the general body functioning introduced. The general body was a congregation of party members, militants and sympathisers, where serious discussion, criticism and self-criticism of individual members of the unit, work distribution and checkup etc. were out of place. Likewise the mass front factions were also dissolved.

(b) A minimum compulsory party work for every party member was not insisted upon; consequently the contribution of part-time work by comrades employed in different professions



had vanished. The number of paid wholetimers was *increased in* such a way that they have reached in some districts to 100-150 and in several provinces to several hundreds. Thus a top-heavy machinery with which a revolutionary party can never function had been created. More than anything else, the work and life of the party was made to be based upon not on the bulk of the membership but on this chunk of paid wholetimers.

(c) Consistent with the above bourgeois methods of organisation, the bourgeois financial methods were adopted. Neither the membership fee nor the party levies were regularly collected. Instead of basing the party finances on such party income and other mass collections, it was based on the lump-sum contributions of individual sympathisers and members coming from bourgeois and landlord families. A working class party with a system of bourgeois finances had become the feature.

(d) The ideological and theoretical education was systematically discouraged. Hardly a few hundreds all over the country were given short-time schooling and the symbolic schools that were held were made the virtual platforms to preach and instil the social-democratic ideas on political-organisational matters. Any attempt to study the classics was labelled as abstract Marxism and all such comrades were treated with contempt, calling them 'bookish', 'unpractical' theorists.

(e) Criticism and self-criticism—the chief weapons without which a Marxist party gets rusted and destroyed—was either totally given up or made a formal mockery. Not once the central committee submitted any self-critical report in the period between 1940 and 1948 during which time the central committee had very seriously erred, for example, as in the case of six months of refusal to orientate towards the change in the character of the war after the Soviet Union was attacked, when the central committee did not provide the ranks with any educative self-critical document. During the anti-fascist war, neither periodical self-critical examination of its policies and practices was ever taken up nor the entire work of the period assessed soon after the war. In the post-war period, the central committee had come

out with nearly half a dozen political resolutions, starting with the 1945 September draft that visualised a peaceful transition to freedom and ending with the June resolution on Mountbatten award in 1947. On none of these cases of volte face—a self-critical report was ever sent to party ranks or even to provincial committees and district committees. The inner-party struggle for a correct line was dreaded and the party ranks were never taken into confidence. The central committee members who were expressing their differences on political line from time to time resiled after a show of opposition and entered into opportunist compromises. Thus a false sense of political unity of the central committee was demonstrated to deceive and silence the ranks. An uncompromising, irreconcilable struggle on principles—theoretical, political and organisational—had become alien to the central leadership.

(f) Rank-and-file initiative was killed. Spoon-feeding methods were taught and a disastrous theory of separation of political and practical leadership was invented and the central committee was supposed to be the exclusive political leader and the rest were asked to follow and do the practical jobs. Thus a bourgeois pattern of infallibility of leaders and the blind followers, the bourgeois style of work, style of journalism, reading and writing etc. were developed.

(g) The slogan of building a mass party was extended to the ridiculous end and the standard for a party member was reduced to the standard of a sympathiser and a militant. If the general membership that had grown in the people's war period itself was from the peaceful struggles characteristic of that period who could not be steeled and tempered in big revolutionary class struggles, the bringing down of the level of party membership to that of the masses had added to reduce the party organisation almost to the state of a mass organisation.

The elements coming from the proletariat and other toiling classes were neither developed nor promoted to leading positions at any level in a serious way and untempered petty-bourgeois intellectuals—most of them coming straight from colleges and universities—were placed in key and responsible positions in the party organisation

(h) The colonial conditions were ignored and a cheap imitation of the parties of bourgeois-democratic countries was made. During the period of legality in the anti-fascist war, with illusions of peaceful transition, with no recognition of cruel imperialist rule, full legalist methods were introduced. The party leadership never for a moment thought of illegality to be imposed on the party. It can be seen from the fact that all the party members and contacts in the military, navy and air force and government offices were openly exposed to the last man. Not a sympathiser nor a donor is kept away from the eye of the imperialist government. This miserable lack of foresight open all the flanks to the class enemy. When a situation would arise for the party to work almost illegally, the enemy could easily strike at its vitals and make existence and conspiratorial illegal work of the party a hundred times more difficult.

Thus the grave errors of a social-democratic nature in that period left the party, at a crucial turn, extremely vulnerable, debilitated and devitalised with the capacity only to function the reformist, peaceful, open and legal struggles but not the serious revolutionary tasks in illegal conditions.

### **Second Party Congress and After**

By the time the second party congress was held, the party organisation, with the standard of party membership reduced to mass level, completely corroding its revolutionary position and fighting capacity, was with a total membership of 90,000. The new leadership which came to the helm of the party leadership had fared no better with the party organisation. The most surprising thing to be noted here is, that at the second party congress which was held five years after the first congress in 1943, there was neither a party organisational report submitted to the party congress nor was the serious inner-party position at all understood then. The fight against reformism was so shallow and single-tracked as to satisfy with the political side of it and on the organisational side removal of Joshi from the central committee was thought to be a complete remedy.

With the change of political line of the December resolution and a complete break with the collaborationist bourgeoisie and

an irreconcilable fight against it was decided, the bourgeois government began to hatch its plans of offensive against the party. A good part of the southern delegation, representing more than 50,000 party members, had to attend the second party congress with warrants on their heads. Hardly a month after the congress the party in Bengal was banned. The polit bureau had not cared to issue a single circular or party letter, sending directions and instructions on the necessity of illegal functioning and strictly illegal party building. The moment we corrected our former grossly reformist line and put the party on the lines of struggle, a good section of the alien class elements who came into the party in the reformist period began to slowly quit the party. Faced with the intensification of partial struggles of workers, agricultural labour and tenants on one hand and the ferocious attacks by the police and the military on the other, almost half of the party membership that was recorded at the second party congress had left the party. The sectarian polit bureau did not draw any lessons even then. On the other hand, it was issuing slogans of revolutionary assertion of legality, while already the party was under virtual ban in the territories where there was three-fourths of the total membership.

The party organisation which headed the most militant mass struggles during this period when faced with the increasingly ruthless 'retaliatory' attacks of the government—had lost, by the end of 1948, nearly half of the membership recorded at the second congress.

The polit bureau had by then worked out a full sectarian line in its new documents on 'Strategy and Tactics', 'Agrarian Question' and 'People's Democracy' and pushed through the new adventurist line with authoritarian and titoite methods of organisational discipline throughout the year 1949. It neither cared to take note of the growing white terror in the country, nor took steps to guard the party organisation against the annihilating attacks of the ruling class.

(a) The sectarian party leadership began to enforce its disruptive disciplinary actions, such as removal and reorganisation

of provincial committees and district committees, suspensions and expulsions.

(b) The weapon of self-criticism was abused and 'confessions' were extorted at the point of the discipline-bayonet.

(c) Inner-party democracy was completely negated and an authoritarian regime of terror was introduced.

(d) The old reformist methods of party finances, top-heavy organisation with hundreds of paid wholetimers, of running the press and journals, style of work were all continued and were sought to be kept intact. As the cruel logic would have it, the party organisation that was built with the reformist policies and practice dominating it had again become the vehicle to run a thoroughly sectarian line and when faced with the brutal onslaught of the collaborationist government, it suffered devastating blows, resulting in very serious damage.

### **Present Position of the Party**

Coming to the present position of the party it has to be characterised as extremely serious. It faces an all-round crisis—political, organisational and financial. All the evil effects of years of both right-reformist and left-sectarian politics and methods of organisation, all the unbolshevik practices and style of work have now burst forth like a volcano creating an all-round innerparty crisis.

Politically, great confusion prevails inside the party while the new line is under discussion. This confusion has almost paralysed the party into inaction. Of course exceptions are there with regard to certain party units in certain territories but these do not alter the general picture. The party members, disappointed by the successive right-reformist and left-sectarian mistakes of the leadership, have come to a stage where they are not able to put faith in any leadership at any level—from the central committee down to the lowest unit, not able to act with conviction and determination.

Organisationally, as a reaction to the long suppression of inner-party democracy and bureaucratic and authoritarian mode of functioning in the past, a tendency to anarchy has been raising

its head inside the party throwing to winds all party forms. In the name of inner-party democracy and fighting bureaucracy, anti-party, opportunist and disruptive trends have been raising their head which if unchecked will breed factional tendencies that will seriously threaten the unity of the party.

The organisational position is equally bad. In the absence of factual organisational reports from most of the provinces no correct numerical strength of the party can be ascertained. But on a rough calculation, the formal party membership stands at twenty to twenty-five thousand. How far all this membership is functioning in regular party units or cut off from regular connection due to savage repression and lack of proper tech-connections can only be ascertained if all the committees, from province down to the cells, send factual up-to-date reports. But it is not an exaggeration to state that majority of the party members are not yet recognised in properly functioning cells or other party units. Generally speaking, no proper illegal tech-apparatus exists which can withstand the cruel onslaught of the enemy which is mounting its offensive against the party in most parts of the country.

Taking advantage of the political confusion, loose organisational functioning, weak party tech and above all the anti-proletarian tendencies that are already at work inside the party, the class enemy is trying to reap its full harvest and making frantic attempts to wipe the party out of existence not only by intensifying its attack from outside but from inside also. In the background of the desperate attempts of unleashing a new world war by the Anglo-American war bloc with which the ruling clique of our country has lined up, and considering the vital position that India holds in the imperialist war plan, such attempts against the party on the part of the imperialists and their henchmen cannot but take more and more menacing proportions.

The financial position of the party from top to bottom is also precarious. A top-heavy party machinery at every level has been built up basing on the vicious principle of over-centralisation and a wholetimer for every job, out of all proportion to the strength, resources and needs of the moment, involving thousands

of wholetimers and lakhs of rupees. The inner-party crisis has aggravated this aspect of the situation beyond measure.

It is true that the political initiative of the party members and party units at all levels has been released after the appearance of the information bureau organ editorial of 27 January last, showing greater participation of the ranks in evolving the new party line and smashing the old bureaucracy that suppressed inner party democracy and strangled free political discussions inside the party. But in its place real inner-party democracy, i.e. ranks and lower party units *effectively* participating in moulding the inner-party life on correct party principles, has not yet been established. The low ideological level of the party as a whole due to the lack of proper education in the fundamemntals of Marxism-Leninism and their application to the practical problem facing the party, stands as a big hindrance in the way of effective participation of the ranks in shaping the inner-party life and taking *proper* share in moulding the decisions and policies of the party.

But in spite of all these, the party has at its disposal the forces capable of successfully heading the revolution if a correct political line and tactical methods are adopted and proper organisational principles are applied. It is not only the formally organised party members, but innumerable party militants are also there coming from all sections and classes of our people, who have been thrown up and steeled in course of thousands of heroic and glorious battles waged under the party flag. With proper and correct approach they can be organised into a mighty force inside the party. The loyalty of the party ranks and those unnumerable militants to the cause of Marxism-Leninism and international communist movement is so great as it was never before. The onward march of the world communist movement headed by the great CPSU(B) and particularly the heroic battles and great successes of the brother communist parties in Asia have drawn millions of our countrymen into the ranks of supporters and sympathisers of the party and an inexhaustible source of strength in building a mass party. The developments in the international situation and also the internal situation of

our country offer great opportunities for unifying and regrouping our forces.

The hopes of the class enemy and its cruel designs of annihilating and destroying the party have so far failed. The party can heal its wounds, reorganise its forces, unify its ranks and march ahead to build a revolutionary mass party if it is not unnerved before the enemy's offensive, if it does not lose heart at the organisational dislocations, but works with full confidence in the fighting revolutionary forces of our country in the present-day world background and scrupulously maintains its unity.

To build a mass party capable of playing its historical role in building the people's democratic front and standing at the head of the armed guerilla struggle for achieving the final victory in the war of national liberation for freedom, independence and democracy, the following tasks have to be fulfilled:

1. *Guard the unity of the party as the apple of the eye.* The party can really be unified and its unity can be maintained on the basis of a correct political line—the discussion for which is now going on inside the party. But for conducting this discussion in a fruitful manner so that the correct line can be quickly evolved, every party member must rise to the occasion and pledge to fight for maintaining the unity of the party and its safe existence while the discussion is going on and conduct the entire discussion in a proper party way. For this purpose the following principles have to be accepted:

(a) Acceptance of the editorial of the *Lasting Peace* dated 27 January, the Peking manifesto and the documents of the Soviet and Chinese comrades as the basis of our new political line.

(b) The tendencies that are raising their head to disregard all party forms have to be immediately checked. Minimum party discipline has to be maintained so that a proper atmosphere may exist for carrying on the inner-party discussion in a free and frank manner.

(c) All political trends which accept the abovementioned international documents as the basis for the political line and those who respect party forms will have to be represented in the party committees at all levels.



(d) All party committees from bottom to top have to be reconstituted through election, on the basis of discussion on the new line, and criticism and self-criticism of the activities of the respective party unit and individuals concerned. Only in an exceptional case, any party unit may be exempted from election.

(e) Inner-party discussions have to be carried on properly on the basis of the international documents, the central committee documents and the documents submitted by other comrades or committees for discussion, under the guidance of the central committee with a view to hammering out the new political line at the party congress.

(f) All charges having connections with enemies and *serious* lapses of party discipline have to be properly inquired into.

(g) All cases of disciplinary action on committees and individuals taken in the left-sectarian period have to be reviewed and proper justice has to be done.

(h) The party of the proletariat cannot continue to function without a central political line. The party cannot sit quiet while world forces are rapidly on the move, masses in our country are going into struggles, other parties are moving in their own way misleading the people in a reformist or reactionary channel and the enemy is seriously trying to isolate the party from the masses and has been hurling mortal blows to destroy it. So long the new political line is not finally endorsed by the party congress the line given by the central committee should be considered as the central party line. But as serious disagreements exist inside the party over the line no disciplinary action should be taken against any comrade or party unit for non-implementation of the existing CC line. The party work, in such circumstances, can be carried on on the basis of whatever common understanding is there with the CC line.

While the new line is under discussion no party member or party unit should rush to the press or go before the public and thus take the inner-party differences outside the party form .

2. *Forward to build a strictly illegal mass party.* While the Anglo-American imperialists with thier monstrous designs are out to destroy the very existence of communist parties, when the stooge Congress government has undertaken the role of the

principal hangman in Asia bent upon violent liquidation of the party, it would be treacherous to the working class and the freedom struggle for any communist to entertain legalist illusions. The banner of legality is the voice of the liquidator inside the party.

Building up of a strictly illegal party is a precondition to unifying the party by chalking out a correct political line; such a party organisation alone can undeviatingly hold on and further develop the present bases of armed resistance such as Telangana, Andhra, hill-border regions of Mymensingh, Tripura and Manipur and boldly initiate the agrarian struggle and armed guerilla warfare wherever possible; such an illegal party alone can boldly popularise the slogan of armed struggle amongst the people as to make it their common consciousness that it is the only way to defeat the imperialists and native reaction.

Leaving details of steps for further clarification, the following steps are immediately to be taken:

(a) A census has to be taken of all the existing party membership and all those who are ready to work for the party and abide by its discipline should be organised into illegal cells. All normal duties of the party members including the paying of party membership dues to be *strictly* enforced.

(b) The new recruits, even in provinces where formal and nominal legality exists for the party, should not be exposed as communists and party members.

(c) The present top-heavy machinery that is threatening to crash any day from the CC down to a DC has to be reorganised. The illegal organisation demands greater decentralisation and the extreme centralisation that is still being persisted in our organisation is a constant threat to the illegal party.

(d) Party's finances are to be based on the people and pooled in a people's way and have to be stopped from depending on a few big donors.

The present number of paid wholetimers, whose burden on the party cannot be maintained any longer, will have to be reduced to a minimum number absolutely required; the rest are to be sent to different areas to continue the part-time revolutionary work

while maintaining themselves in some profession or other. This course is inevitable and has to continue until such a time the party is put on sound revolutionary rails of finance and the people's movement under our lead would be able to bear the burden of these finances.

3. *Keep constant vigilance on the activities of the enemy agents and spies.* The vigilance against spies and police informers has to be redoubled; the menacing leakage of every circular to the government on the morrow of its issue is an alarming signal for every party member. Different international agencies for spying and wrecking activities are running riot in our country under the patronage of the government. Their methods are manifold; they employ their agents to drag the party into an endless discussion as to cripple its active functioning, to spread gossip of factional quarrels in the party, to propagate false and concocted stories on individuals to undermine the authority of the leadership at different levels; they utilise the 'kept' bourgeois press and pretend to take sides on inner-party controversies and attempt to mobilise all favourable trends that are likely to help reaction and all this in the name of correct Marxism and its correct application to India.

4. *Make Bolshevik style of work based on initiative, the basis of practical activity.* The bourgeois style of work based on bureaucracy, overcentralising and curbing the initiative of party members and lower party units, practised in both the reformist as well as sectarian days, has to be totally changed. New Bolshevik style of work based on the initiative of the party members and the lower committees has to be developed patiently. Thus it is by making the party members and lower committees to act with initiative and tackle the problems they face in the practical activity without waiting for the guidance and directives of the higher committee as in the past, that we can develop mass activity and build a mass revolutionary movement in these days of illegality.

5. *Make criticism and self-criticism a constant feature in our party activity.* Bolshevik criticism and self-criticism, the weapon of cleaning the party of all the rust and improving the

understanding and mode of work of each committee and individual in particular and the party as a whole in general has been misused both in the days of reformism and sectarianism. Specially in the latter days of sectarianism, it went to the extent of extracting catholic confessions. We have to restore the Bolshevik methods of criticism and self-criticism to their proper place and make constructive criticism and genuine self-criticism as the regular practice inside the party, to sharpen one's own understanding and get rid of anti-proletarian ideas and practices as well as clean the dirt from the party as a whole. Without restoring Bolshevik criticism and self-criticism in the party, it cannot be built up as a mass party capable of fulfilling the great tasks history has placed on it today.

6. *Make the education in the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism and their application to our day-to-day practice a regular feature of our party life.* Education in the principles of Marxism-Leninism and their application to the day-to-day practice has never been encouraged in the past. In order to be able to make the party members and all party units effectively participate in moulding the party life and contribute their share in shaping its policy, to make them act with initiative and tackle the problems facing them in their daily activity and fight the alien-class ideas and practices, we have to make the education in the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism and their application in the daily activity a normal regular feature of our entire party from top to bottom. For this party schools have to be organised as *permanent institutions* inside our party.

The entire party from top to bottom must undergo such schooling in one way or another. Immediate schools for cadres have to be organised for training them up for different jobs as party unit leaders, tech organisers, mass front organisers, guerilla leaders, etc. Arrangements have to be made to educate the illiterate party members in reading and writing and to impart education in the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism to them.

Without raising the ideological and political level of the entire party, the party cannot fulfil tasks that have devolved on it.

## **Armed Struggle As The Principal Form Of Struggle**

First of all it must be made clear that the form of armed struggle that we speak of today in relation to our liberation struggle is entirely different from the classical form of political general strike and countrywide armed uprising; though the slogan of armed struggle we now advocate also comes under the broad concept of armed uprising, it has its own special laws as distinct from the countrywide armed uprising. It is erroneous to confuse these two forms of struggle. If each is not understood in its proper context, we are sure to fail to grasp the essence of the present slogan of armed struggle, which has to be an essential component part of our political line.

These two forms of struggle, of countrywide armed uprising and the armed struggle we now speak of, arise in the background of two totally dissimilar objective and subjective conditions of a revolution and these two special forms of political struggle have two special rules that have to be studied diligently and mastered well.

The objective and subjective conditions, i.e. prerequisites for issuing the slogan of countrywide armed uprising or classical insurrection, are according to the teachings of Lenin and Stalin broadly as follows:

The call for such an uprising can be given when the "whole country is convulsed with crisis, mass indignation and revolution", when a "bold, unanimous, organised, simultaneous, aggressive, audacious and determined onslaught" against the class enemy is possible and inevitable; and when the majority of the working class is won over to the side of revolution, when the majority of the people are either won over for direct political action or at least for benevolent neutrality and above all when a party capable of leading the insurrection has come into existence.

As pointedly put forth by Lenin, they are:

"(1) all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently entangled, are sufficiently at loggerheads with each other, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle which is beyond their strength;

“(2) all the vacillating, wavering, unstable, intermediate elements—the petty-bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois democrats as distinct from the bourgeoisie—have sufficiently exposed themselves in the eyes of the people, have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy,

“(3) among the proletariat, a mass sentiment in favour of supporting the most determined, supremely bold, revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie has arisen and begun vigorously to grow.

“Then revolution is indeed ripe; then, indeed; if we have correctly gauged all the conditions indicated and briefly outlined above, and if we have chosen the moment rightly, our victory is assured” (*Leftwing Communism* ).

Now, coming to the special rules of this form of struggle, Lenin summarises in the following way:

“But armed insurrection is a *special* form of political struggle, subject to special rules which must be attentively studied. Karl Marx expressed this thought with remarkable salience when he said that armed ‘*insurrection is an art quite as much as war*’.

“The principal rules of this art, as laid down by Marx, are as follows :

“(1) *Never play with insurrection*; but, when once it is begun, know firmly that it must be *carried through to the end*.

“(2) Concentrate, at the decisive place and time, *forces greatly superior* to those of the enemy; otherwise the latter, better prepared and better organised, will defeat and ruin the insurgents.

“(3) Once the insurrection has begun, it is necessary to act with greatest *determination*, and, at all costs, on the *offensive*..

“(4) Make sure of taking the enemy by surprise, and seize the moment when his troops are scattered.

“(5) Endeavour to win success *each day*, even small ones (one might say ‘each hour’ in the case of one town), and at all costs maintain ‘*moral ascendancy*’.

“Marx summarised the lessons of all revolutions concerning armed insurrection in the words of ‘Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary policy yet known; audacity, audacity and once again audacity!’ ” (“Advice of an Onlooker”).

The above passages make it abundantly clear the preconditions and special rules that are necessary for the special form of struggle of 'insurrection'.

The armed struggle we advocate now is distinct from the above. It is a peasant war under the leadership of the proletariat. "The total concept of this kind of struggle", as Mao puts it, is "guerilla warfare". "It is the inevitable and hence the best form of struggle in a backward, vast, semicolonial country and over a long period of time by the people's armed forces to overcome the armed enemy and to create their own bases."

This form of struggle is resorted to when the class enemy, afraid of the deepening economic crisis and the growing mass upsurge that might develop into a political general strike and countrywide armed uprising has unleashed an armed offensive to foil and smash such a development; when the organised revolutionary forces are comparatively weaker and the forces and weapons of the class enemy stronger; when the class enemy of the revolution bars all the doors for normal, peaceful people's day-to-day forms of struggle to defend, nourish and advance the revolutionary forces and when the necessity arises and possibility exists for the revolutionary forces to defend themselves and grow through adoption of other effective form or forms of struggle.

The special rules for this form of struggle are briefly as follows.

"The tactics of guerilla warfare should be waged on the principles of initiative, agility, planning and attack, adapting to the conditions of the enemy, topography, communications, weather and the strength of the guerillas and the inhabitants at a given time and place, to operate according to the directives of striking at the west by pretending to attack the east, of avoiding the strong and attacking the weak point, of assuring freedom of advance and retreat, of waging brief battles of quick decisions, and in the case of an enemy force stronger than ours, to operate according to the directives of 'we retreat when the enemy advances; disturb him when he rests, strike at him when he is tired and pursue him when he retreats'. Under these directives, we wage battles to raid, disrupt, ambush and sabotage the enemy

from his rear, flank and unguarded or weak spots, thereby to expose, confuse, contain and split the enemy, to delay and wear him out to beat and destroy him" (*Aspects of China's Anti-Jap Struggle* by Mao Tse-Tung).

Now it is clear that these two different forms of struggle—the insurrectionary uprising and armed guerilla warfare arise in two different conditions of the revolution, have two different special rules and two different starting points, traversing two different paths though ultimately both aim at the defeat of the enemy and victory of the revolution.

If the first begins as a *final counter-offensive*, on the initiative of the revolutionary forces against the *tottering class enemy*, the second is started, in the first place, as a measure of sheer *self-defence* against the attacks of the *stronger enemy*, though pure and simple defence does not lead the revolution to victory without steadily acquiring the means and strength to counter-attack and destroy the enemy. If the former sets as its first target to storm the strongholds and the key centres, the latter first chooses the weakest centres of the enemy. If one is a battle waged with thoroughness for a *quick decision*, the other is a *prolonged warfare to wear out and conquer* the enemy; while the main theatre of struggle for the former is cities with the *proletariat as the main driving force*, the main theatre of struggle for the latter is the rural side with the *peasantry as the main driving force*—though both can achieve victory only under the firm political, ideological and organisational leadership of the proletariat and the communist party. When a strong national united front, well-organised class and mass organisations and a sufficiently strong nationwide communist party, etc., are the essential preconditions for starting the insurrectionary form of struggle and its successful conclusion, in the case of the latter all these conditions can be materialised only on the eve of final victory in the long process of armed guerilla warfare and its prerequisites are of entirely different nature and *their character will be changing from phase to phase, stage to stage and territory to territory* and so on and so forth. If for the timing and the execution of insurrection,



*countrywide* and highly *centralised directives* are absolutely necessary, the timing, planning and execution for the armed guerilla warfare depends, to a great extent, for a long time, until a certain stage, upon the *local, zonal and regional leadership and their concrete study and initiative*, though of course subject to the strictly defined and chalked out political line of the party. Thus there are a number of differences between these two forms of struggle which should never be mixed up and confused one with the other, but a clear grasp of these differences is absolutely essential for a proper understanding and effective implementation of the form of struggle we advocate now.

Secondly, we have to take stock of the special characteristics of our country that place before us this path and perspective of guerilla warfare as an effective path and form of struggle in our war of national liberation.

The characteristic of our country is basically colonial with feudal and semifeudal forms of economy dominating, with no genuine national independence and democratic system in existence, with a numerically small proletariat and city population, with vast spaces of the rural side embracing 87 per cent of the population, with agrarian revolution as its immediate task, with imperialists and their lackeys resorting to ruthless armed repression on the masses, not tolerating the growth, nursing and for the matter even the very existence of the revolutionary forces. Hence it is utopian to think of legal existence of the revolutionary forces with their peaceful normal forms of struggle or the path of armed insurrection, capturing the cities first and then liberating the countryside; but our path is just the opposite, i.e. capturing the countryside first, leading to liberating of cities next.

The failure to understand these specific characteristics and the consequent special laws operating in our country and a cheap attempt to copy verbatim the fighting strategy of the developed capitalist countries by both the right-reformist and left-sectarian lines pursued in the past by the party leadership have resulted in paralysing the progress of revolution and has allowed the imperialist enemy to advance with his armed reaction. And this

failure, apart from the right-opportunist and left-sectarian strategical mistakes pursued so far by the party, is one of the basic causes for losing the initiative in the revolution to the enemy, particularly in the post-war period.

Thirdly, this type of armed struggle will necessarily have a number of phases and stages according to the specific conditions obtaining in each case. In our case it might be safely said that it has to traverse through the stages of guerilla resistance with whatever available arms that the people can lay their hands on through the formation of extensive guerilla areas, the establishment of liberation bases and formation of liberation armies whenever conditions permit, advancing to the stage of final offensive for complete victory with regular warfare.

Accordingly the form of this armed warfare also will change, i.e. from the armed guerilla resistance by small squads to the positional warfare passing through different stages and forms of warfare. Each of these different forms of armed struggle again in its turn assumes according to the phase and stage, as the principal form and the others become in their turn auxiliary to it. For example, in the final stage of offensive, the preliminary form of armed guerilla resistance behind the enemy's rear becomes auxiliary to the regular warfare. The failure to understand these aspects and attempt either to skip over the preliminary and difficult stages or to stick to one form of struggle when a change for the other becomes necessary and possible, is harmful for the revolution; the former would lead either to helpless passivity or adventurist gamble and the later leads to defensist disruption.

In this connection another important aspect always to be borne in mind is that while conducting this form of protracted armed struggle, there might arise a situation whereat the liberated bases might be occupied by the enemy's overwhelming armed forces and have to be transformed into guerilla districts and resistance areas for a time; similarly, a situation might arise whereat even after the formation of regular armies, we may be required to disband these regular formations to be deployed extensively for partisan warfare and again mobilise them into

regular standing armies when conditions demand and permit that course.

While adopting this form of struggle, it would be simply utopian and schematic to visualise a straight line advance from resistance areas to liberated areas or from partisan squads to standing armies. Depending upon the course of the revolution and the alignment of forces on the side of the revolution and counter-revolution, the stages of this form of armed struggle will change from a preliminary partisan warfare to a higher stage and vice versa or liberated areas to resistance areas and vice versa; if one fails to understand this zigzag course of armed struggle, it would lead to many dangers. For example, if in every territory we start this form of warfare, if we attempt to establish liberated bases and cling on to them before the overwhelming enemy strength, it will only lead to the decimation of our forces. In the same way, if one attempts to risk the entire forces to keep a liberated area as a liberated area when a retreat is necessitated, it would destroy the revolutionary forces. Likewise, when regular army formations face the danger of frontal attacks and encirclements, to attempt to keep them intact and continue the positional warfare without disbanding them and deploying them into mobile units and partisan squads is simply suicidal.

These are only some of the very broad outlines. Unless our party, along with the correct political line, also learns and masters the military line of this type of armed warfare, it cannot lead to a successful conclusion of our national-liberation struggle.

Fourthly, the problem of establishment of liberation bases is to be constantly kept in mind and a resolute struggle to realise them has to be carried on because without liberated bases guerilla warfare of such a protracted and cruel nature cannot be continued for long.

The topographical and terrain conditions occupy a great prominence, besides the political, economic and social and such other objective factors, when the question of liberation bases comes into serious consideration.

No set of rigid rules can be framed except to state that the mountainous and forest areas, which offer exceptionally favourable conditions, occupy the first place; next, the territories, which are crisscrossed with rivers, lakes, etc., also offer protection, making the speedy movement of the enemy difficult. The plains come under the last category, where it is extremely difficult to create liberated bases, especially in the earlier periods of armed warfare when the enemy's forces are far superior to those of revolutionary forces.

However it should never be generalised and concluded from the foregoing, and it would be a great mistake to do so, that armed guerilla resistance is only possible in forest and mountainous areas and impossible in plains. It is wrong, in the first place, to confuse the question of creation of liberated bases with the question of partisan guerilla resistance; and secondly, the comparatively greater difficulties and risks to conduct armed resistance in plains should never be equated with the idea of impossibility of partisan resistance. If a suitable mass programme of action is taken up, if proper organisational steps are worked out, if flexible fighting methods are evolved, if people in the area are roused for the revolutionary implementation of agrarian reforms, there is no other effective form of resistance than armed resistance and it is quite possible to carry on armed resistance in all the above territories.

Finally, it is necessary to clearly grasp the truth that the armed struggle has become the principal form of struggle in the present agrarian revolutionary stage that our national-liberation movement has grown to. It would be erroneous to think that this principal form is the only form of struggle because without simultaneously adopting and coordinating all other conceivable forms of struggle, such as the economic and political strikes, demonstrations, agricultural labour and tenant struggles, signature collections for peace pledge, election contests and so on and so forth, the armed struggle alone can neither be conducted for long nor ultimately can success be attained.

The fact that armed struggle has become the principal form of struggle for our revolutionary movement in our country for

this period and the objective conditions exist today in our land for the people to take to this form of struggle, does not mean that the *entire* people *all over* the land have already begun the armed struggle or would begin the moment we issue this slogan. Such simplified understanding can only emanate either from sheer ignorance about this forms of struggle or from the illusions that still persist in the insurrectionary form of struggle. It only means that the revolutionary forces can defend, exist and further advance at this stage of our struggle for national liberation by adopting armed resistance as the principal form for the simple reason that armed counter-revolution cannot be successfully resisted and defeated except through an armed struggle.

Whether a particular form of struggle becomes the principal form or not is only decided by the role it plays in *decisively advancing* the revolution and the absence of which *decisively retards* the progress of the revolution and throws it backwards.

The armed struggle remains the main form and does not cease to be so even though the party is immediately capable of organising and conducting it over a large or small territory—whether it is half or one-tenth or one-twentieth part of our country, it remains and does not cease to be so even though the stage and form of this armed struggle or its extensiveness is a preliminary stage of guerilla resistance.

The revolutionary significance of armed struggle as the principal form of struggle can only be understood by the political and revolutionary content of it in a given stage of the revolution but not by an arithmetical calculation of the proportion of forms of struggle that the revolutionary forces adopt at different places and in different conditions in the given period as a whole. For example, in Telangana during the last three years and more, our party has led struggles on a number of issues in which other forms of struggle than this principal form of armed struggle have been adopted in the majority of instances and in the greater part of the territory too. All the same armed struggle remains the principal form with which all other forms of struggle were coordinated.

To deny the armed struggle, under whatever pretext, as the principal form of struggle before the people's democratic revolution in India in the present period, is nothing short of denying and questioning the whole set of relations obtaining today, such as the existence of colonial slave order, deepening post-war crisis, the mass upsurge, the existence of the organised revolutionary working class and the Communist Party, the changed correlation of forces in the post-war period in the world, the brutal armed offensive of the counter-revolutionary alliance of imperialism and native reaction with a view to liquidating the vanguard forces of the revolution. Again, to confuse the concrete question of when, where and how the armed struggle as the principal form of struggle *for this period* is to be guilty of failing to understand both the slogan and its concrete application.

So far we have broadly discussed the outline of the concept of the armed guerilla struggle as the principal form of struggle for this period and stage of revolution. Before concluding this topic, we would like to refer to some of the points that a number of comrades, who accept this form of struggle on principle, have been raising questions, in the form of doubts and which require some clarity.

The nature of these doubts and questions is briefly as follows:

*Is armed guerilla struggle to be organised where a strong party and consolidated mass organisation are in existence? Is it to be launched in the extremely backward and feudal regions?*

*Is it to proceed first from unleashing partial struggles on such issues as agricultural labour wages, food, tenants' rights, etc., culminating in armed struggle and in land distribution? Or are we to take up land distribution and armed struggle simultaneously? Is it not a precondition that modern arms are procured first and political and military training on guerilla methods is given before resorting to armed struggle? Is the armed struggle possible only on territories where the national question has become a burning issue as in Telangana and Andhra? These and similar other questions are often raised by comrades in all sincerity.*

But this way of approaching the problem of organising the guerilla struggle or answering each of these questions by 'yes' or 'no' would lead us nowhere near the practical approach to this issue. These questions and doubts are of the nature that they only touch the surface of the problem and attack this issue from different angles, without taking the *whole issue* by the horns

An examination of our own experience would help us better than a volume of academic replies to all the questions raised.

For example, Tripura state, on the border of Assam, where the people have taken up armed struggle in the recent period, offers us one experience. In Tripura, our party unit is a small unit, not exceeding half-a-dozen members in the actual fighting zone. There are no strong class or mass organisations under our leadership. There the basic objective factor being the wide agrarian discontent, the struggle had burst out under the slogan of 'land to the tillers' and democratic rights of the state people. When the Congress government resorted to armed suppression, the freedom-loving people looked for the political, ideological and organisational guidance of the Communist Party. To show them a way to resist armed repression and defend themselves, our party comrades there on their own have taken the task to guide and lead it and place before them the path of armed guerilla resistance. Now a dogged and bitter resistance is going on with whatever arms the people can produce and they are heroically defending themselves and their interests against the savage armed attacks of the government. The party's prestige is growing, the basis for building a mass party and class and mass organisations is laid and has been widened and offers us the prospect of making it a strong guerilla base.

If such is our experience in Tripura where armed guerilla resistance has become possible, the case of Kerala where our party is a hundred times stronger even today, where a more mature states' people's movement is in existence, where the downtrodden peasantry under feudal and semifeudal burdens is seething with discontent, where the national problem is acute, where during the 10 to 15 years of our militant mass struggles,

strong trade union and kisan organisations have been built, where the terror rule of the Congress government is running riot for the last two and a half years and more, and where exceptionally suited topographical and terrain conditions exist for waging a guerilla war—in such a province of Kerala, our party unit there is not yet able to advance this form of struggle in the people to adopt and conduct it.

This is another experience.

To take another instance of Bihar, where the national problem as such does not exist in the *acute*st form as in the cases of Andhra, Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra, etc. the peasantry, deprived of land and food, has begun to rise for a revolutionary seizure of foodgrains. Our party unit, though not very strong in the province as a whole and weak too in the particular zones of this acute crisis, is putting before the people the slogan of armed guerilla resistance against the punitive expeditions and military attacks of the government; organising and conducting to the best of its understanding and capacities. If our party unit there can successfully head this people's upsurge, correctly meet the political, organisational and technical tasks, effectively popularise and implement the slogan of armed resistance and master to utilise and coordinate all other forms of struggle with this, there is every prospect of a successful building up of a people's democratic front, a strong party and strong mass organisations, exposing and isolating the treacherous social-democracy that is conspiring to cheat the people and bag them.

It is needless to discuss here the experience of Andhra, Telangana, hill border regions of Mymensingh, etc. which have been discussed enough in the previous chapters and separate fuller reports as information documents are already placed in the hands of party members.

In the light of these experiences, it is not only difficult but impossible and also wrong to attempt to issue such directives as to when to begin, where to begin and how to begin, etc. in this statement of our policy.

It might be possible that our comrades in Nepal, where there is only a small and young party unit, may be able to successfully utilise the present national upsurge and the struggle that is going



on there, boldly advocate this form of struggle and adopt it as and when the conditions are mature. The Nepali people, militant by tradition, inspired by the victories of the liberation army of China on their borders, might in a short time take to this guerilla form of struggle before some other territories in India where the party and people's movement are stronger, will be able to take up this form of struggle due to several reasons.

Similarly, our party unit in Kashmir—though today extremely small and weak—may be able to advance this slogan among the people of Kashmir as to make them adopt it in the face of the Congress and League's betrayal and mortally-threatening domination of Anglo-American imperialists. The Kashmir people gripped with terrible agrarian discontent, a powerful urge for national self-determination and with heroic traditions of glorious anti-feudal, anti-imperialist struggles may be able to take up armed struggle for agrarian reforms and national independence. Such possibilities exist and nobody can rule them out in the present rapidly-developing situation. Neither over-optimistic prophecies nor pessimistic and defeatist denials would lead us any further in the matter. But a concrete study of each case and a correct application of the political line alone settles the question.

*The question of party and mass organisations:* The task of organising guerilla warfare and conducting it, is undoubtedly an extremely difficult one which requires constant and correct efforts in organisation and training. As Lenin points out in relation to partisan warfare:

“This is a difficult task, there is no doubt about it. It cannot be accomplished at once. Just as the whole people are being retrained and are learning to fight in course of the civil war, so our organisations must be trained, must be reconstructed in conformity with the lessons of experience for the performance of this task.”

This incontrovertible truth does apply with all its force and implications in our case. Our party and mass organisations today, in face of terrible onslaught from the ruling clique and due to our failure to adopt a correct strategy and tactics—a correct method of organisation and resistance, have been landed to a

very critical situation. The party is seriously disorganised; the mass organisations almost out of existence *in form*. But from this disorganisation of the party and non-existence of the mass organisations in form, to conclude that everything of the party and the revolutionary movement has gone out of existence is simply a liquidationist evaluation. The truth is that the years of work that the party has conducted in different territories and the revolutionary consciousness it has roused among the people, their loyalty to the red flag and their revolutionary urge for land, bread, freedom and peace have not gone out of existence. And they can be galvanised and reorganised only if a proper and correct political line is there and the proper form of organisation and struggle, suited to the condition, are adopted. Without adopting such a course, they can neither fulfil their revolutionary task of the period, nor can their forms be maintained to carry out the task. Undoubtedly the present line of the party and the task of the period require a higher form of organisation than we have so far been accustomed to.

*The problem of cadres:* This is essentially a people's form of struggle. It is wrong to base our calculation for beginning, developing and carrying it to success on the number of our party members without taking into consideration the millions of workers and peasants who have again and again fought innumerable glorious battles under the red flag and who stand as inexhaustible reserves of the revolutionary forces. The problem of cadres for the guerilla armed struggle can only be solved if we keep the following precious enunciation of Mao in our view:

"There is not an unfathomable gap between a common man and a soldier and he can be a soldier in a minute if he wishes to do so. It does not matter whether or not you are common man and your ability to engage in a battle of words is even an asset. When you are organised, you become a part of the army, and when you shoulder your gun you become a soldier. Guerilla warfare is a military college and a few trials on the battlefield would transform you into a complete general" ("Aspects of China's Anti-Jap Struggle").

*Training and arms:* For conducting the armed guerilla warfare successfully, the problem of training and arms has to be correctly

understood and tackled. Wherever the condition demands and permits the taking up of this form of struggle, the party should organise a minimum preliminary necessary training of the party members and the worker and peasant militants so as to equip them with certain fundamentals of the theoretical and practical aspect of the struggle. Same way, the arms also have to be procured and a special effort has to be made. However the principles of training and procurement of arms are of a special nature for this form of warfare. The master strategist who headed and guided this form of struggle for more than 20 years, teaches us thus:

“Though it is difficult for a guerilla force to acquire arms and munitions, especially in the beginning of its formation, the problem is not insoluble. A guerilla force created out of a civilian population would, as a rule, be equipped in the initial stage with nine-cartridge guns, native guns, shot guns, spears, lances, big swords, native cannons, pine-tree cannons, native mines and similar primitive weapons and sprinkled with a number of modern rifles. Increase in the quantity as well as the quality of these is to be achieved gradually by acquisition from the enemy as well as the people through numerous battles. The supply of munitions is specially dependent upon the enemy. In this respect surprise attacks on the enemy's supply columns are the best means, as successful attacks would transform the enemy supply into ours” (Ibid).

*On what issue to begin:* The armed guerilla struggle on some territories may be advocated and initiated under our party's leadership on the burning issue of food and go to the question of seizure and distribution of land. In some other territories it may take its start as a measure of fight against repression already clamped down or in the process of being clamped down on the people. Again in other places, it may start in defence of partial struggles unleashed on the day-to-day issues of the people. Therefore any cut-and-dried rules for the questions of where, when and how to begin cannot be framed. But on whatever issue the guerilla armed struggle is begun, unless it is linked up with the question of land and people's power, i.e. village people's committees, it can neither be sustained for long nor can it be extended and deepened.

*The basic conditions for starting the guerilla armed resistance are:* The peasants' urge for land and their revolutionary fighting mood and their support, a numerically strong or weak party capable of giving them political, ideological and organisational leadership, the armed repression of the class enemy depriving the people of any other effective form of struggle to defend themselves, their hearths and homes and their revolutionary struggles. Besides these basic factors, many other additional factors—favourable and unfavourable—exist and influence this form of struggle either way; but they can never form the *decisive factors* to determine this very form of armed struggle.

It is the task of different provincial, regional and local party leaders to examine in detail the concrete conditions in their respective areas where they function and decide the issue in the light of different experiences of our own country as briefly narrated above and in the light of the invaluable Chinese experience and the experience of Southeast Asian countries where this form of struggle is being waged.

Its importance cannot be described more pointedly than Liu Shao-chi, when he said: "The existence and development of the working class organisation and the existence and development of a national united front are closely connected with the existence and development of such an armed struggle."

It is the duty of our party and the people to perfectly understand and utilise the effective form of struggle and advance the revolution to a successful conclusion.

### **People's Democratic Front And A Correct Approach For Building It**

The people's democratic front is the fighting front of all the anti-imperialist democratic forces, i.e. the workers, peasants, petty-bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie, with the parties, groups and individuals representing them. It is based on the firm alliance of the workers and the peasants led by the proletariat and its Party, the Communist Party.

The working class and its party—the Communist party are the leader, guide and the architect of the people's democratic front. If the party has to fulfil such an historic task it must have

a thorough understanding of the scope and nature of the people's democratic front. It is therefore necessary to make a diligent study of the experiences of the international proletarian movement on this question; the party must make a study of its own past on this issue drawing proper lessons; it must also master the strategy and tactics of the period and determinedly act to realise the people's democratic front.

In the earlier period, when our party was still young, the dominant tendency inside the party had been sectarian; it refused to work in the then existing trade-union organisations under the reformist leadership and insisted on setting up exclusively separate and independent trade unions, irrespective of the expediency of such a step and the result was a failure to forge a broad trade-union unity—the lever for a national united front against imperialism.

The party refused to recognise the then still existing anti-imperialist role of the national reformist opposition of the Indian big business as represented by the Congress leadership, resulting in the failure to utilise the mass anti-imperialist organisations under Congress leadership, by joining them and working in them. It failed to participate in the anti-imperialist demonstrations and struggles, which were of course conducted under the bourgeois leadership in a typically reformist way, and failed to extend its mass influence.

The serious political, ideological and organisational differences that were prevailing inside the party had seriously impeded the unity of the proletariat and the party; the lack of such a unity had in turn seriously affected the struggle of that period to forge a revolutionary united front. These are in brief the lessons of the early period concerning the problem in discussion.

Following this during the long period of 1935-48, when we were supposed to have corrected our former sectarian mistakes, we steadily landed ourselves in the reformist mistakes and the entire approach to the problem of united front had suffered serious right- opportunist deviations. Besides a number of other mistakes with regard to our approach to the problem of allies, the main

mistake of this period was in our conceding the national big bourgeoisie the character of a *revolutionary opposition* against imperialism. This basic mistake had led us to a number of errors, resulting in the failure to successfully build a revolutionary united front, a revolutionary working class movement and a strong party to assert the proletarian hegemony over the national-liberation movement.

The party leadership, while correctly stressing the necessity of working inside the mass anti-imperialist organisations under the Congress leadership, seriously underrated the significance of the building up of independently class and mass organisations and the party and actually building up of the Congress organisation was made the main plank in many places.

Secondly, while in the former sectarian period, the party refused to utilise the national reformist opposition of the big bourgeoisie to foreign rule, in the latter period of right-reformism in the name of utilising that opposition of the big bourgeoisie, which of course was aggravated by the intensification of the crisis of world capitalism and the consequent rise of fascism, affording the proletariat a greater scope for the sweep of the revolution—we failed not only to expose the treacherous reformist ideology of Gandhism and its bourgeois exponents before the people and isolate them; but also by boosting of Nehru, Gandhi and national leadership to skies had helped to create further illusions in the people.

Thirdly, the party leadership failed to take note of the growing capitulatory tendencies on the part of the Congress leadership towards imperialism, which were particularly marked during the later period of the war itself and became more pronounced in the post-war period and landed itself in enunciating the policy of "Support Nehru government"—a government of compromise, collaboration and national betrayal. Thus when a complete break with and an irreconcilable opposition to the native big bourgeoisie was a historical task of the proletariat, we pursued a policy of united front with it. And the result was the utter failure to fulfil the basic task of building up of a real, fighting united democratic front against both imperialism and native reaction and tailing behind the native big bourgeoisie.

Moreover this right-reformist policy of the party, in the name of such 'national unity', had not only hindered the independent organisation and building up of workers', peasants' and other people's movements but also restricted the scope of the forms of struggle that were adopted in the workers' and peasants' struggles. Not a few instances could be found during this period—particularly in the later part of it—where militant and higher forms of struggle were discouraged under the pretext of 'inviting repression' and 'danger of disruption', to forge a so-called united front! This kind of trimming of the sails of the proletariat and its party to suit the vagaries and machinations of the native big bourgeoisie by restricting and confining the forms of struggle to the strictly 'peaceful and normal' method did neither bring the realisation of a united front anywhere nearer, nor the people were rescued from the illusions of the bourgeois forms of struggle, helping them to take up and advance to higher and revolutionary forms of struggle.

And now, during the last two and a half years beginning with the second party congress during which a definite swing towards the discredited titoist concept of monolithic front was observed (it persisted until the first resolution of the information bureau exposing the activities and policies of the Tito clique was published and circulated) the struggle to correct this right-opportunist attitude towards united front has once again ended in a crude sectarian approach to the entire problem. While correctly breaking away from and taking up an irreconcilable opposition to the collaborationist bourgeoisie, we made a present of some of the democratic sections of the people and our allies such as the middle bourgeoisie and the rich peasantry to the class enemy, thus curtailing the scope and disrupting the formation of a wider united front against imperialist-big bourgeoisie-feudal combine which was absolutely necessary and quite possible at this stage.

The party leadership failed to fight the machinations of the big bourgeoisie and the socialists and others to disrupt the working class unity and to destroy the organised revolutionary working class movement. Not only the failure to fight out these

disruptive moves of reaction and its lackeys but also the insistence on the sectarian organisational and mass front demands and launching of struggles by hurling in the vanguard sections, had only resulted in helping the enemy and failed to achieve the desired working class unity.

The forms of struggle that were advocated during this period in the cities were 'putschist' in their nature, which failed to take note of growing white terror, with the result that the party failed to unite its class in its struggle on the day-to-day demands, not to speak of border unity with other sections of toiling and democratic masses.

In the rural side, besides the disruption caused in the peasant front by the sectarian strategy, the forms of struggle the party leaders advocated were mass frontal clashes with the police and the military. This resulted in giving the upperhand to the enemy and facilitated a speedy smash-up of our own forces. Instead of attacking the enemy from different angles and at different times, harassing, wearing out and delivering deadly blows, in short, instead of adopting guerilla partisan warfare as the main form of struggle, the adventurist method of mass frontal clashes were resorted to, which has not only failed to unite the toilers and other sections in the rural areas against the armed offensive of the counter-revolution but only helped the vanguard of the fighting people to get smashed quickly, resulting in the disruption of the existing fighting unity of the people.

To conclude, in brief, if right-reformism advocated and pursued a policy of alliance with the class enemy in the name of 'united front', left-sectarianism refused alliance with the democratic classes and section; if right-opportunism, reeling before enemy's repression, retreated all along the line and liquidated the struggles, left-adventurism refused to take note of the growing white terror and attempted to push through the classical insurrectionary fighting strategy; if right-reformism under-rated the independent role of the proletariat and its mobilisation and tailed behind the bourgeoisie in the united front, left sectarianism, in the name of independent strength, mobilisation and the hegemony of the proletariat, undermined



the formation of a united working class movement as well as a fighting united front of all democratic classes and groups. Thus the concept of united democratic front, in this period of left-sectarianism, which started during the second congress with the Titoist idea of a monolithic front, finally landed in the absurd and vulgar liquidation of the very revolutionary understanding of a united democratic front in our country's war of liberation.

Drawing on these lessons, it is necessary to restate briefly the correct viewpoint regarding the people's democratic front.

The people's democratic front, the party visualises, is a united front of workers, peasants, petty-bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie, and the parties and groups representing them, based on the minimum programme of our party and the fight for its realisation. Such minimum programme, in the opinion of the revolutionary proletariat and the Communist Party, shall contain all the basic demands that have been enumerated in the previous section as the immediate programme of the people's democratic revolution. The Communist Party, while persistently fighting for the acceptance of this minimum programme by all the allies in the front, does not demand of these allied classes or parties and groups representing them, the acceptance of the party's maximum programme, i.e. socialism. The party which has a single accepted ideology of Marxism-Leninism, has its own discipline based on democratic centralisation, and is agreed upon both maximum and minimum programmes, can alone be correctly characterised as monolithic. It would be utter nonsense to speak of a united front of several anti-imperialist and anti-feudal classes as a monolithic organisation. And any insistence on the monolithic character of the united front would result either in liquidating the party by merging it in the front, and in sacrificing its independent existence as is evidenced in Yugoslavia or the front would get disrupted because of the insistence of such a monolithic nature.

The people's democratic front that the party visualises is a united front of armed struggle. Without such a front, the present ruling bloc of imperialists and their native satellites can never be defeated and overthrown from power and the realisation of a

people's democratic order under which alone the successful implementation of the people's democratic front's programme is possible and fully realisable, can only be achieved through a united front of armed struggle.

But such a front on a country-wide scale cannot come into existence all at once. The development of such a front is a process of struggle for unity in action—beginning from joint demonstrations or action for the most easily understood demands of the different sections to the highest form of struggle for peace, land, bread and independence on a more permanent basis.

The most effective way to build such a front is to build it from below. It does not preclude agreements at the top between leaders and individuals of different organisations and parties. Such agreements often become essential to facilitate unity from below. But to achieve this, the party has to systematically and persistently approach the different left parties, groups and individuals, patiently argue and thrash out the differing viewpoints and evolve the common basis of agreement for action. While doing so, the party has, at the same time, to expose the activities of the disruptive leaders before their ranks and masses and fight in a determined manner the influence of bourgeois nationalism that persists in them.

The people's democratic front can be materialised only if the proletariat and the Communist Party simultaneously fight for the just democratic demands of all the allied classes and groups on the one hand, and on the other, resist and fight back the vacillations, illusions and the narrow, sectional undemocratic demands against the proletariat and the people either by one or more of the allies in the front of the party or parties representing them. The building of such a united front and the struggle to realise it does not proceed over a straight and smoothly paved road on which all democratic forces can march in unison but over a difficult and strenuous path of unity and struggle within and sometimes without. Of course it will neither be an irreconcilable struggle as between two hostile classes, trying to destroy each other nor a unity which excludes all struggle whatsoever.

The independence of the proletariat and the party for mobilisation and action is an indispensable condition for a successful building of a people's democratic front. The independent strength and mobilisation of the proletariat and the party is the real lever on and the pivot around which the fighting unity of the democratic classes can be forged at all. The party, bearing this truth in mind, has to undeviatingly act up to it. Consistent with this, the party neither demands the liquidation of other parties as a precondition to join the united front nor allows any such disruptive demands foisted on it by any class or classes and the party or parties in this democratic alliance.

The party would be prepared to work in cooperation with all the democratic and left parties, groups and their mass organisations and to invite them to join the people's democratic front. It reserves the right to criticise any individual group or party which opposes, sabotages or disrupts a united action or the formation of such a united front. While it would reckon with the existing realities by recognising, cooperating and uniting with all the democratic left parties, it does not take upon itself the task of encouraging, forming and building up of such parties. The party on its own will simultaneously carry on the struggle to unite all the democratic classes under the direct leadership of the proletariat.

Our party in its struggle to build the people's democratic front of armed struggle, reserves the right of propaganda and practice for the armed guerilla warfare as the principal form of struggle at the present stage of our national-liberation movement. But it neither chooses or attempts to foist this form of struggle on the classes or parties that are not yet convinced of it nor allows itself to be dictated to by the other parties on their own reformist forms of struggle which they may believe as effective.

The party firmly believes that the efficacy of armed struggle can be best demonstrated as to make it acceptable by other parties, class and groups into democratic front if only it implements it basing on its own independent strength wherever and whenever it is capable of mobilising people for organising such struggles. In areas and territories where such armed resistance

develops, the party visualises the alliance of different anti-imperialist parties and groups and the evolution of the people's democratic front of armed struggle comprising them on a local or territorial basis which in the process of development and expansion, will assume wider and wider character.

The party does neither make the acceptance of any particular form of struggle by other parties a pre-condition for either a united action or united front nor accepts the demand of giving up the armed struggle if demanded by others as a condition for the united front. As already explained in the foregoing pages, the party certainly takes up other forms of struggle also, wherever they are necessary and possible, as auxiliary to this main form. Accordingly the party would not only utilise all to the conceivable legal and semi-legal forms of struggle, but also cooperate in the forms of struggle the other parties would adopt in conducting mass struggles, even though the party believes that they are not really effective forms. While participating in them, it expresses its criticism on these forms and patiently explains it to the fighting people and the parties concerned. Thus the forms of struggle it pursues and adopts from issue to issue are flexible so that a really revolutionary united front of armed struggle is created and developed.

Such, in brief, is our broad concept of a fighting people's democratic front.

## Letter To All Party Members And Sympathisers\*

As you have already learned from a press statement a meeting of the central committee of the Communist Party of India was held in December 1950, with the participation of those members of the central committee elected at the second party congress, who for various reasons could not attend the May- June meeting of the CC. Some of the resolutions adopted at the meeting have already been sent to the press. Other resolutions are being sent to the party units.

The meeting adopted only those resolutions on which there was broad general agreement, though one or two comrades expressed dissent on some points. On issues on which sharp differences revealed themselves, no resolutions were adopted.

In order to appraise the work of this meeting, it is necessary to keep in mind the situation in which it was being held.

The meeting took place in the background of the gravest crisis in the history of our party, a crisis created by our inability to resolve the sharp political differences that have arisen in the party. There have been, as comrades know, different interpretations of the LPPD editorial of 27 January 1950, different estimations of the national political situation and the immediate tasks facing the party. Many of these differences have been formulated and elaborated in documents that are there already before party members and more documents on the subject will be circulated. It is not our purpose in this letter to describe these differences as they are already known to party members.

The fact however cannot be ignored that the unresolved conflict on political and organisational issues has virtually paralysed the party and has reduced it to a state of passivity at a period when mighty events are taking place in the national and international arenas. When mass radicalisation has reached tremendous heights

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\* Issued by the Central Committee of the CPI on December 18, 1950

and when great possibilities have opened up before the working class and the party to unite our entire people in the struggle for freedom, democracy and peace. At a period when the communist parties all over the world are leading great battles against the imperialist warmongers and are emerging as the decisive force in their own countries uniting ever-broader sections of their people and breaking the shackles of imperialist rule, our party stands disunited and virtually immobilised.

This has caused deep concern to large sections of our people and to our brother parties. It has given rise to deep discontent and frustration in our own ranks and bred a spirit of distrust and lack of confidence. Simultaneously the urge has grown, as seen in the resolutions of several important units, that the growing disintegration of the party must be arrested, that the minimum unity must be restored for the carrying out of immediate tasks, that the disastrous drift towards a total break-up of the party must be checked. •

All of us who took part in the meeting were conscious of the gravity of the inner-party situation, conscious of the danger of a total break-up of the party and also of the deep urge for unity. We were therefore determined to strain every nerve to evolve ways and means to restore the minimum unity in the party despite the sharp political differences that existed in order that the struggle for a correct political line could be carried on in a proper manner and atmosphere and the party could discharge its immediate responsibilities in relation to our people.

We had decided to hold the meeting for at least 15 days. We found however that for certain reasons the meeting had to be finished in six days. This made it impossible to discuss the vital political differences that had arisen. This fact must be kept in mind by comrades when they judge the decisions of this meeting.

In a communist party, real organisational unity can be achieved only on the basis of a unified political line, the inner-party crisis can be resolved only on the basis of a correct understanding of the causes of the crisis. It became very clear however during the preliminary discussions in the CC meeting that on these very points sharp differences continued to exist as before.

Most of the CC members (June CC) continued to hold the opinion that the political line as formulated in the "CC Letter to the Party

Members", though it suffered from lags, was basically correct and that the party crisis was mainly due to the activities of those who did not accept that line and were attacking it from a reformist understanding of the LPPD editorial. Those who criticised the CC line maintained that the CC had misinterpreted and distorted the meaning of the LPPD editorial, that the CC line was left-sectarian and adventurist and that the party crisis was mainly due to the efforts of the CC to implement the wrong line. There were comrades who were critical of both lines. It became clear that no agreement on these vital issues was possible. It was realised that only the help of brother parties and the holding of a party congress could lead to the evolution of a unified political line.

The question that inevitably arose was whether the meeting should disperse after cataloguing the political stand of the CC members and invitees and entrust the CC as reconstituted in June to prepare for the party congress and carry on work in the meantime. Alternately, whether those who had opposed the CC line should, by themselves take over these tasks and responsibilities. Though these questions were not formally raised in the CC meeting, they were discussed among comrades informally and everyone agreed that either of the courses would be disruptive of the unity of the party and worsen the inner-party situation.

If the protagonists of either line had been convinced that their line was bound to have international support, that they were in a position to unify the party as a whole and discharge the tasks and responsibilities in this critical period, then they could have taken over the responsibility. In view of the repeated mistakes that each one of us has committed all these years, in view of the theoretical and political immaturity of each one of us having been exposed again and again, in view of the seriousness of the inner-party crisis when the party seems almost evenly divided on the political issues and many comrades do not fully support either of the two major trends, none of us could have that confidence. We had also to consider what effect any change would have in the areas where the party is engaged in a life-and-death struggle. Everyone of us therefore felt the need for more effective guidance and help from our brother parties.

The object that we set before ourselves therefore was to formulate those immediate political and organisational tasks on which there

was broad general agreement and to bring about such changes in the central leadership as were essential to carry out these tasks to expedite the task of receiving fuller international guidance and prepare for the party congress on the basis of thorough inner-party discussion.

The meeting resolved to place the building of the unity of the left parties as one of the main tasks before the party and to demand the immediate holding of general elections and the full restoration of civil liberties.

It adopted a resolution on trade-union work with the building of the unity of the working class as the key task. No agreed resolution could be drafted on agrarian struggles.

The CC adopted a resolution on Korea and resolved to work out a policy of mobilising the people for peace on the basis of the decisions of the Warsaw congress.

It resolved that every effort must be made to defend the cause of the Telangana fighters and that no comrade should issue slogans of withdrawal of Telangana in the press.

It resolved to re-admit into the party all those comrades who had been unjustly expelled during the period between the second party congress and June 1950 (Practically no expulsions have taken place after June). It resolved to re-admit into the party Patkar, Tambitkar and others, as well as Sane, Bhayyaji and others of Maharashtra and reconstitute the Bombay and Maharashtra committees.

It reopened the case of P.C. Joshi and referred it to a commission of two comrades. A commission was appointed to inquire into the conduct of B.T. Ranadive and other four PBMs against whom serious charges have been made. In the meantime, these comrades are not to hold any responsible position. The agit-prop committee formed in June therefore gets automatically dissolved. A third commission has been appointed to inquire into the case of Ravi Narayan Reddy who was expelled by the Andhra PC. All these commissions have been asked to finish their work as speedily as possible.

A commission has already inquired into the allegations against Dange for alleged connection with Tito agents and squashed the charges. The CC accepted the commission's verdict.

The CC also corrected certain mistakes in recent party documents about "freezing of funds" and about the responsibility of a sympathiser in continuing the Tanjug agency.



The CC decided that provincial conferences should be convened at the end of about 3 months and the party congress should meet in 6 months' time. The exact procedure for holding these conferences would be conveyed later.

The agreement that was reached on these political and organisational issues of immediate importance naturally brought the question of a united centre to the forefront. To give effect to the above decisions, to ensure that the resolutions are implemented, to maintain the minimum degree of party unity, to reactivate the party and to convene the party congress, the formation of a united centre was absolutely necessary. Concretely it meant such enlargement of the CC and such reconstitution of the PB that the major trends are adequately represented.

Moreover these leading bodies have to be such as would reflect the entire collective experience of the party. One of the factors that has aggravated the inner-party crisis is that comrades in different areas, and having led different types of struggles, have acquired different experiences and the tendency has grown to base oneself on one's own experience alone and ignore or minimise the importance of the experiences of others. The need for a collective leadership is there in every party, but all the more so in our country where conditions vary so widely, where problems are so different in different areas and where it has not been possible so far for the party to assimilate the entire experience and evolve a line for the whole country.

Finally, these leading bodies have to be such as would command the maximum confidence in the party as it is today all over the country.

It was on the basis of these considerations that the changes in the central committee and polit bureau were effected.

Somnath Lahiri had, even before the CC meeting, offered his resignation from CC. His resignation was accepted. Ranen Sen, who did not want to be in the CC, was persuaded to remain. Jyoti Basu, a member of the old CC explained why he did not want to be in the new CC and his explanation was accepted. The CC therefore had to be formed with 8 members of the existing CC, 5 out of the 6 former CCs who had attended the meeting and a veteran comrade from Bengal. A comrade from Tamilnadu is to be added after consultation with the Tamilnadu comrades. The new PB consists of Rajeswara Rao,

E.M. S. Namboodiripad, S.S. Yusuf, Ajoy Ghosh and S.A. Dange. Basavapunniah was relieved at his own request and replaced by Namboodiripad. Biresh Misra did not want to remain in the PB. Rajeswara Rao continues to be the general secretary.

Formed on the basis of representation of divergent political trends and in order to carry out the limited tasks before them, the CC and PB cannot be what these bodies are expected to be and must be in a Communist Party. They have to function today under the limitation imposed by the present state of the inner-party crisis.

We have placed before the comrades frankly and fully what considerations weighed with us in arriving at these decisions. We are fully conscious of the criticism that can be made of them. We want to stress however that we were all convinced that not to take these steps would have worsened the inner-party situation, might have led to a total break-up of the party and the destruction of all that has been built by the self-sacrificing work of so many years. We had to devise means by which the struggle for a correct political line could be carried on without destroying the unity of the party itself, the present state of paralysis could be speedily ended and a party congress convened in the shortest possible time. We have every reason to believe that the political and organisational decisions we have taken are correct in the existing conditions and are essential.

Comrades would naturally like to know why the re-organisation of the CC and PB was not done on the basis of criticism and self-criticism of the PB and CC members as well as the former CCMs, as is always done in units of the Communist Party. The basic reason is that in the absence of our unified political line and in the absence of a political-organisational report based on that line, such thorough criticism and self-criticism was not possible except in cases where it was considered essential to correct certain factual errors that had crept in recent PB documents. A proper political-organisational report on the party crisis as well as the work of the PB and the CC will be prepared and circulated in the ranks before the party congress.

Having stated the causes that led us to adopt the course that we adopted, we want to clarify certain other points:

A letter from the CPGB political committee headed by R.P.Dutt containing notes for discussion was received by the PB in the

beginning of October. In the covering note of the letter which has now been circulated in the ranks, the CC, as reconstituted in May, has given its explanation as to why this letter was not circulated earlier.

It should be stated here that Lahiri, a member of the reconstituted CC, had wanted the letter to be circulated immediately after it was received. The PB however wanted it to be first placed before the CC. As for the ex-CC members, who attended the meeting, they were all of the opinion that the letter was an extremely important contribution towards a correct understanding of the LPPD editorial, that it raised very important political and organisational issues which were being discussed in the party ranks and as such it should have been released to the party ranks immediately after it had been received. They stressed at the very beginning of the CC meeting that it must now be realised without delay.

The majority of the members of reconstituted CC (June) however wanted to secure the approval of R.P.Dutt himself before releasing the letter and arrangement was being made by them to secure this approval when message arrived from a responsible sympathiser that R.P.Dutt himself wanted the letter to be discussed in the party ranks and that it had been so released. On this, the letter was circulated.

We are stating these bare facts without any comment.

As regards the contents of the letter, though it could not be fully discussed in the CC, it was clear that sharp differences exist among those who took part in the meeting as to whether the criticism made in the letter of the CPGB is correct, and if so, to what extent. The question is now before the comrades and final verdict of the party congress.

We want to inform comrades in this connection that every effort is being made by all of us to contact RPD again to clarify certain points and obtain the guidance and help of other brother parties also and we have every reason to hope that such guidance and help will be given.

We do not expect comrades to be satisfied with the extremely inadequate political guidance that has been given in the resolutions, nor with the organisational changes we have made. We want to assure them however that whatever differences existed—there was complete agreement on one basic point, the unity of the party must be

maintained, the struggle for a correct line must be conducted in such a way as not to impair that unity. Bearing this in mind, comrades should judge the decisions of our meeting and criticise them, if they are incorrect.

We do not expect comrades to hail all our decisions. We know they can be criticised from many angles. But we do expect from all comrades genuine cooperation and such criticism of our work as will help us to unify the party and discharge our duties and responsibilities at this critical hour. Without such help and such criticism, we shall not be able to carry out even the minimum tasks that we have set before ourselves. We also expect that the party units will seriously re-start mass work on the basis of the resolution that have been adopted at this meeting, speedily ending the present state of paralysis of the party.

We are confident that all party units and all comrades will respond to this appeal in the spirit in which it is being made. We hope they will help us to restore party solidarity, conduct struggle for a correct line without mutual recrimination and guard the unity of the party. With such cooperation from our comrades and with the guidance and aid of our brother parties, we hope to resolve present crisis speedily and go forward to the task of leading the battle of our class and our people, for freedom, democracy and peace.

## **Suggestions & Criticisms On Draft Programme And Policy Statement Of 1951 Of The Communist Party Of India\***

THE following note is the result of preliminary discussions by the Kerala POC of the Draft Programme of the CPI issued by the PB on April 24.

1. Our discussions were based on the copy of the Draft Programme received at the *Viswakeralam* office. This copy contains many obscure passages and often sentences which have no meaning. It is quite likely therefore that our criticism, based as it is on such a copy, may sometimes be misconceived or beside the point.

2. Our opinion is that on the whole this document is satisfactory and gives us immense relief. It reflects the true idea of the LPPD editorial more than any other document till now issued by the Centre either jointly or otherwise. It thus carries us a long step forward in our political discussions.

3. The Mountbatten Award, the policies of imperialism and Indian big bourgeoisie following the Award, their repercussions, political and economic, on different sections of the Indian people, the position at present of the Government of India—are all dealt with in a popular manner and on the whole correctly.

4. The character of the revolution that is to take place in India is People's Democratic. The state structure corresponding to it has been described in a manner suited to the present level and consciousness of our movement. In the Chinese Peoples' Consultative Conference, the principle of democratic centralism has been openly proclaimed as the principle of state structure. Only such a state structure can carry out People's Democratic

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\* *Inner-Party Discussion Pamphlet for Members only. Issued by the Communist Party of India in August 1951*

Dictatorship. But in India it is not advisable to use that term although that principle has to be accepted. And the document puts it in a concrete and acceptable manner.

5. In the economic sphere the document aims at the destruction of the imperialist big bourgeois monopoly, industrialisation and land reform. The programme sets forth land reform (land to tiller), the raising of the standard of living of the working people (social insurance, living wage, etc.) and ending the competition of foreign capital (the confiscation and nationalisation of the capital of imperialism and under the signboard of Indian companies). This programme helps greatly to mobilise all sections of the people opposed to imperialism and feudalism.

6. The policy of uprooting from the military, from industry and from the cultural sphere of all foreign imperialist influence, of quitting the Commonwealth, of building a firm alliance with our brother people of Pakistan and with all peace-loving, democratic powers, is the path of national independence and freedom.

These are the good points of the documents. But at the same time it also contains certain very grave defects. It introduces very serious opportunistic tendencies which if not corrected at once are likely to lead to all sorts of deviations.

7. The LPPD journal carries several articles of Communist Parties all the world over defining the perspectives of revolution in their respective countries in the light of the national and international situation. In all these the clear warning is given of how American imperialism is going to enslave and is at present enslaving their peoples. The main enemy of the world peoples is American imperialism, the leader of the reactionary camp. Hence unless the spearhead of the anti-imperialist struggle is directed against America, the force of peace, democracy, socialism and freedom cannot advance an inch.

8. Lack of this outlook is a grave defect of this document. American imperialism was trying to penetrate into India even while the war was on and afterwards (the honeyed words of America about Indian freedom, Chiang's visit, etc.). American

interests have come into close economic relations with a section of the Indian big bourgeoisie. Today they are making an open bid for influence. American influence is penetrating India in the guise of food-aid, loans for irrigation projects, etc. There was formerly in India a sentiment of sympathy for America. Of course there has been a big change in this after the outbreak of the Korean war. This document does not even touch upon any of these things. In the last section there is a passing reference to the fact that America is the main enemy. Nothing more. The document most emphatically and outspokenly gives the slogan of confiscation of British capital and dismissal of British advisers, but is silent about American capital and American advisers. (It was only recently that concessions for opening a manganese mine in Orissa were given to America.) American imperialism is also utilising and penetrating through the French and Portuguese possessions in India. Immediate merger of these possessions in India should be demanded. This question also is ignored in the document.

9. The failure of the document in this respect, that is, emphasising British imperialism to the exclusion of American imperialism which receives only a passing reference, has to serious consequences: (i) failure to expose the sinister activities of American imperialists and their attempts at penetrating and enslaving this country; (ii) preparing the ground for American spies and agents to have a free play.

10. The document does not seem to have taken into account carefully the objective situation in India. For instance, it has omitted to bring out the significance of the role played by the organisation of the Indian big bourgeoisie, viz., the Indian National Congress. Hence it ignores the machinations of the Congress. The reactionary leadership of the ISP encourages these machinations as well as the machinations of American imperialism, through its anti-Soviet and anti-Communist propaganda and activities. This too the document has missed. This is a grave defect.

11. The portion dealing with the present stage of the revolution is as such as is likely to lead to deviations. The document says:

"In the present stage of our development the Communist Party is not demanding the establishment of socialism in our country". It is wrong to pose it like this. We must say that the party's ultimate aim is no doubt socialism, but that the present stage of the revolution in India is People's Democracy. India can attain socialism only through people's democracy and hence to raise the slogan of immediate socialism is to betray the people's democratic revolution and thereby to betray socialism itself.

12. Nehru's foreign policy is described as Spurious. It is not the correct way of putting it. We must show the duality of Nehru's foreign policy, assess it at its real worth in developing the peace movement and expose those aspects of it which are opposed to peace and national independence and which are pro-imperialist. The party must adopt the line of exposure best suited to create public opinion in order to force the hands of Nehru to take steps for friendly alliance with China and Russia and for protecting India's interests. The growth of the peace movement and powerful anti-British, anti-American propaganda are factors helping this. To ignore the penetration of American imperialism and to expose Nehru's foreign policy negatively as spurious will result, we feel, in indirectly encouraging the American machinations. Hence we are of the opinion that the understanding and outlook and method of exposure contained in this passage should be corrected.

—The influence of American imperialism is increasing in India through its native agents, the big bourgeoisie, we must expose it thoroughly.

—Show up the weaknesses of Nehru's foreign policy. Show how it helps Anglo-American domination in India and sacrifices Indian interests.

—Thus show how even Nehru's opposition to war and atom bomb and friendship with China will founder.

13. We must also emphatically declare that people's democratic India will establish a firm alliance with People's China and the Soviet Union. The age-old friendship with China, geographical affinity and the common traditions of anti-imperialist struggle are well established facts. The people's democratic revolution in India is of course closely bound up with



the revolution in Britain. The friendship of People's Britain will be of immense help to us also. Even in that perspective, the slogan of firm friendship and alliance with China will not be wrong. The omission to emphasise strong friendship with China together with the omission to expose American aggression has led to the blunting of the anti-imperialist edge of this document. That is positively dangerous.

14. The paragraph dealing with the question of how the Indian big bourgeoisie suppresses the development of different nationalities by using partition, is not clear. To say that Hindi is the language of one province is not true. It is as the commercial language of the Marawari-Gujerati monopolists that Hindi is imposed upon other nationalities. It is also as the servitors of these big bourgeois-feudal rulers that officials belonging to one nationality, thereby deliberately fanning quarrels. Not to bring out these facts sharply is to fail in exposing the big bourgeois tactics.

15. To state in a loose manner that Ceylon is a part of India, that its economy is complimentary to that of India, etc., is wrong. What that passage in the Draft programme which deals with Ceylon actually purports, is not clear to us: That a free India must have friendly relations with Ceylon is true. But from the way in which the relations between India and Ceylon are stated in the document it would seem as though the CPI is moved by imperialistic motives towards Ceylon. The peoples of India and Ceylon must unite today in the struggle against America and after the attainment of freedom must cooperate as free peoples in the interests of both countries.

16. Another thing. The relations between India and Ceylon are not on a par with the relations between India and Pakistan. The feelings and sentiments of the people, the common life through the countries, the historical associations thereby engendered, cultural relations the family connections between thousands of families in both the Punjabs and Bengals—all these bestow a special quality upon India-Pakistan relations. This cannot be said of relations with Ceylon. The document however deals with both these together.

17. When dealing with land reform, abolition of feudal levies and of slave labour should have been emphasised. That is missed. The question of assuring in a fair price to the producer for agricultural products is also ignored. This will not help to cement the anti-feudal alliance of all these peasantry.

18. An emphatic and clear declaration that religions will be protected in People's Democratic India should be included in the programme.

19. In like manner there should be a declaration with regard to women's right to equality.

So far is the Kerala POC's unanimous opinion about the Draft Programme. Separate notes will be put in by those who have other points about which there was no unanimous agreement in the POC.

### **On The Draft Programme And The Statement Of Policy [Communists working in CR]**

1. THE CR comrades have had a preliminary discussion on the Draft Programme and the Statement of policy. They will hold further more detailed discussion on these very important and historic documents. Here we are setting down our first relations.

2. The two documents resolve the differences and controversies on vital issues which so long kept the Party virtually in a state of paralysis and even isolated it from the masses owing to the wrong policies pursued.

Now for the first time, in clear-cut terms the aims and objects of our revolution have been stated; the basic class alliances the strategy, defined; and the correct path, the tactics, outlined. The understanding given is, in its essence, fundamentally new and will enable us to go forward, avoiding the costly errors—both left and right of the past

Today the Party has a line, which we did not have for the last year and a half with such disastrous results. The possibilities thus open out for re-activising and re-uniting the Party in the process of understanding, implementing and enriching the new line on the basis of concrete experience.

This will demand of us utmost initiative and alertness; persistent efforts to raise our ideological level; a readiness to self-critically examine our past activity and learn from it; free and frank discussion, in a disciplined manner, to fully grasp the implications of the new line raising questions and doubts unhesitatingly for clarification; making suggestions pointing out what we feel needs amending or correcting.

3. In what direction have we to make a break from our old understanding?

a) *Nature of our Revolution*: It has now been unambiguously stated that India is still a semi-colony, tied to British imperialism, with the interests of foreign capital and parasitic landlords and princes protected; the development of national industries thwarted. Thus the first phase of our revolution will be *anti-imperialist and anti-feudal*.

b) From this it follows that our approach to the national bourgeoisie must change. After the Second Party Congress, the thesis was put forward that the bourgeoisie as a whole had gone collaborationist and become the spearhead, the leader, of the attack on the popular forces. Therefore, it had to be fought as Enemy No. 1. Later, it was thought that it was the big bourgeoisie which had gone over and a united front with the middle bourgeoisie was visualised.

The understanding which now emerges is that the bourgeoisie—big and small—as a class, has not gone over and can be made to play a positive role. It has not to be fought as a class, though small sections of it may be collaborating with imperialism.

c) It has been emphasised that the *axis of our democratic revolution will be the agrarian revolution*, making the struggle of the peasantry of prime importance. For the achievement of this, actions of the peasantry alone are not enough. Joint action of the working class and the peasantry are necessary. "The leadership of the working class is not realised only through the working class leadership of the peasant struggle but actually, in deeds through the working class boldly championing the demands

of the peasantry and coming to the assistance of the peasant struggles through its own action."

d) One of the most significant contributions of the documents is to *correct* the two mistakes of the past: (i) regarding the working class actions alone as important (described the Russian path); (ii) regarding the peasant actions alone as possible (described as the China path).

The path now defined for us is neither, but a combination of the two—a grand alliance of workers and peasants in action—the *path of Leninism, applied to Indian conditions*.

The core of our National Democratic Front will be worker-peasant alliance, with working class leading in action the struggle of the peasantry and of the whole people and assuming the leadership of the liberation struggle.

e) The futile controversies over immediate *armed struggle or not*, which derailed the Party so long, over violence or non-violence, have been set at rest. It is the people who decide the forms of struggle; therefore, no form of struggle in which the people participate is ruled out. "All action of the masses in defence of their interest to achieve their liberation is sacrosanct."

f) The Statement of Policy gives a sharp warning against *individual and squad terrorism*, which was being advocated by a section of the Party and whose practice was discrediting the party, as being alien to Marxism for the simple reason that in it the masses are not in action, it leads to passivity of the masses and, therefore, harms the revolution.

g) In regard to the *assessment of the present situation*, important corrections have been made which will enable us to steer clear of both sectarian and reformist mistakes.

On the one hand, it is made clear that though the crisis of the Government is deep, it is not yet thoroughly isolated, with the people ready to rise in revolt; conditions of civil war do not yet obtain in the country, nor is Fascism already installed in power or inevitable. Failure to see this would lead us to adventurism, to giving slogans ahead of the consciousness of the people, of the degree of their preparedness for struggle. It would lead to

neglecting the right for civil liberties for which broad sections can be mobilised, refusing to participate and take advantage of the elections, refusing to do the day to day tasks of running and building mass organisations.

On the other hand , it would also be wrong to come to the conclusion that the people are retreating, reaction is on the offensive and that, because the popular forces are disunited, we should abjure all militant actions. Such an appraisal of the situation will lead to betrayal of the masses, because the crisis is deepening, people getting fast disillusioned and big struggles are looming ahead, which the party must lead, overcoming the weakness of mass organisations and disunity of democratic forces.

h) While it is true that supporting the positive steps of *Nehru's foreign policy* has enabled the peace movement to mobilise broader sections of the people against the Anglo-American warmongers, it has to be recognised that there has been a failure (at least by CR) to sufficiently expose this policy as inconsistent and dishonest.

Features of this policy—such as recruitment of Gurkha troops in India to crush the liberation struggle of the Malayan people, the facilities granted to the imperialists to transport war material to Vietnam through India, the sending of the medical mission to Korea, refusal to vote for the declaration of America as the aggressor in Formosa — which directly aid the war-makers have not been systematically campaigned against, though they have been referred to now and again.

4. The above are the major points on which, in the opinion of the CR comrades, we have to revise our earlier understanding.

In the CR we have tended to forget that India is yet tied to British imperialism, we have not shown the British capitalist hold over our economy, we have not exposed British imperialism and its aims as different from American imperialism though acting with it against the Peace Camp.

Again, we have not sufficiently stressed the key task of achieving agrarian reforms as the main link in winning our national freedom, solving the food crisis, industrialising the

country. We have not explained the need for worker-peasant alliance as the core of the Democratic Front.

We have not, for want of proper study, taken a positive approach towards the national bourgeoisie, showing how India's industries are being denied scope for development, taking up such questions as difficulties of raw materials and markets, of importing machine tools, foreign competition, etc.

The CR comrades will make the general understanding contained in the Draft Programme and the Statement of Policy as the basis for their work and will review in detail the past issues of CR in the light of the new understanding.

5. However, there are a number of points on which clarification is needed. It is surprising that the Party has not yet issued any detailed document for its members or written articles to explain the various points of the Draft Programme, stating how exactly the new understanding arises, what are its implications, applying it to different fronts, etc. It is over six weeks now since the Programme was issued and explanatory articles or documents on it should be immediately released. Some of the points which we think should be clarified are:

*A) Class Composition of the Government:* While in the main, the present Indian Government is pledged to the protection of foreign British capital and the interests of the landlords and the Princes, certain sections of Big Business also benefit from it. But how exactly are we to characterise this Government in our agitation and propaganda?

The Draft Programme seems to have a number of definitions some of which appear to be contradictory.

Thus, in Section 2 it is stated:

“...because it was a Government already pledged to the protection and preservation of foreign British capital in India, to protection of the parasitic landlords and the wealth of the princes....”

According to this definition, only the imperialists and the feudals benefit from this Government.

But Section 6 says something different:

“.... This Government which is totally in the grip of *monopoly financiers*, landlords and Princes and the foreign British advisers working behind the scenes.”

At the start, this Section says that “Even the industrialists, manufacturers and traders are hit by the policies of the Government”, but later, a distinction is made between the small industrialists and traders and the big monopolists.

“Allocation of capital issues, raw material, transport, import and export licences, etc. is carried out by the bureaucrats in the Government machinery in such a way as to hit *the small industrialists and traders* and benefit the *big monopolists* in league with the banks and syndicates of foreign firms.”

Section 10 and 14 define the Government as follows:

“.... this Government of landlords and Princes, this Government of financial sharks and speculators, this Government hanging on the will of the British Commonwealth, the British imperialists...”

“..... this Government of landlords and Princes and Big Business, collaborating with the British imperialists.....”

Section 16 describes the present rule as “landlord capitalist rule.” Similarly Section 17 call the present State a “landlord-capitalist State, tied to foreign imperialist interests—mainly British.”

To avoid confusion, it is necessary to have a precise characterisation of the present Government. Which capitalist section are collaborating with the imperialist?

B) *Nationalisation of key industries* : This demand has figured in our earlier programmes. It figures in the programmes of the left parties also. Even the Congress, at its Karachi session, had adopted it. Our present Programme, however, drops it. It is true that it is necessary to explain the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal character of our revolution and our concern for the development of national industries, but the demand has already become popular among radical sections and a proper explanation

for dropping it is necessary. Also what happens to the industries and the businesses of collaborating section of the bourgeoisie? Are they, at least, to be nationalised?

C) Is it strictly correct to say that at this stage, foreign manufacturers “pursuing dumping policies”, are flooding our country with cheap goods (as is stated in the Programme under the section entitled “In the Field of industry and the Labour Problem”?) The common experience would seem to be that, owing to high import duties, etc., foreign goods are quite expensive.

The concrete manner in which Indian industries suffer from foreign competition needs to be properly worked out.

D) What exactly is meant by a Police State? Section 9 of the Programme says:

“On the top of all this comes the fact that this tottering Government in order to keep itself in saddle, faced with the rising discontent of the masses, suppresses *all* civil liberties of the people, outlaws political parties and groups, bans trade unions and other people’s organisations, imprisons thousands of workers, students, men and women in prisons and concentration camps. *The supreme ruler becomes the police official and the bureaucrat*, helped by the local Congress leader and landlord in the whole countryside. No wonder that to maintain such a Police State, the burden of taxes increases and more than 50 Per cent of the State Budget is spent on military and police...

Will not the conclusion be drawn from this that we already have Fascism in India—an understanding which is repudiated in the Statement of Policy?

E) Hindi is not the language of one province (as is stated in Sec. 14 of the Programme); it is spoken in U.P., Bihar, parts of C.P., E. Punjab, Rajasthan, etc. Also, while we oppose the imposition of any language as an obligatory language on other nationalities and stand for equality of all languages, shall we not advocate making Hindi or Hindustani—the most commonly understood language—as the language for the inter-provincial intercourse replacing English?



**F) Section 19 of the Programme reads:**

“Faced with these facts, the Communist Party of India feels it its duty to come to the aid of the people and to outline the practical tasks, the practical programme which the Communist Party of India upholds and which should be put into effect by the working class of India if they wish to come out of the deadlock into which they have been forced by the present Government, if they wish to attain their freedom and happiness.”

This paragraph, to say the least, appears to be badly drafted. Is it only now that we are coming to the aid of the people? Further, the whole posing smacks of a patronising approach making the Party as something apart from the working class, sermonising from above—the Party has given the line and it is for the working class to accept it or not!

G) We do not advocate the *immediate building of Socialism* because of the backwardness of our economy, which is still basically feudal and colonial, and as such we cannot skip the democratic stage of the revolution. But para 2 of Sec. 19. of the Programme adds another reason, viz., the weakness of mass organisations of workers, peasants and toiling intelligentsia. Is this correct? For even if we are able at a later stage to overcome this weakness, as we must if we have to accomplish the democratic revolution, our immediate objective will not alter. It would be wrong to give the slogan of building Socialism once the mass organisations becomes strong till we have overthrown feudalism and imperialism.

H) *Foreign Policy* : There seems to be a difference in approach on India's foreign policy in the Draft Programme and the Statement of Policy. From the Programme it would appear that this policy is wholly reactionary. We are “not interested” in the “spurious play” between peace and war, the “suspicious play” between the two camps, the flirting with the U.S.A—all this facilitates the struggle of aggressors against the peace-loving countries. From this understanding the task that naturally emerges is to expose the Government's foreign policy as a policy of manoeuvre; we cannot take advantage of any steps taken by it which may appear to be for peace as essentially such steps are

dishonest and help British imperialism or facilitate the game of the aggressors.

How then do we explain the support which has been given by international Communist leaders to some of the steps taken by Nehru? Did not, for instance, India's refusal to support the branding of China as an aggressor help the peace camp? Have not some of the war plans of the imperialists being upset because of the Nehru Government's stand? For example, the *New Times* (No. 21, dated May 23, 1951) states:

"But the heaviest blow to British and American diplomacy was the refusal of Nehru's Government to join the aggressive (Pacific) bloc. For, as the Indian *National Herald* pointed out, a Pacific Pact without India would be equivalent to an Atlantic Pact without Britain." (Page 5.)

The Statement of Policy does recognise, even though indirectly, that even this Government may take some steps for preserving peace which we must support. It also calls Nehru's foreign policy as inconsistent and not wholly reactionary.

But the Statement of Policy does not assess how important Nehru's role has been in preserving peace. R.P. Dutt, for example, has attached great significance to it. The CPGB Programme even calls India a "peace-loving State".

In his reply to a question by CR, RPD stated:

"The indications of divergence, even though still hesitant and limited, of Premier Nehru and the India Govt. representatives from the reckless aggressive war policy of the MacArthur-Truman-Attlee bloc in Eastern Asia, are a *very important development of the present international situation.*"

Again:

"Supporters of Peace in India, *while welcoming every step towards disentanglement of India from the Anglo-American war bloc*, will *press forward* with unsparing vigour for the further steps which are necessary in order that India shall fulfil a firm and consistent peace policy."

In his "Notes of the Month" in *Labour Monthly* of November, 1950, R.P.D. wrote:

“Today the alignment of India, even under the Government which was set up by imperialism to serve as its satellite and protege, can no longer be counted on by the Anglo-American bloc, and has taken under the overwhelming pressure of popular national anti-imperialist feeling, the first hesitant steps towards association with China and the Soviet Union in opposition to the latest decisions of the Anglo-American bloc on Korea and on the Acheson Plan for wrecking the United Nations.”

Nehru's foreign policy has undoubtedly aroused a great deal of interest all over the world, some of his concrete steps, have been hailed as helping to preserve peace. It is very necessary, therefore, that a proper assessment of India's foreign policy should be made in order to avoid both extremes of under-estimation and over-estimation which will lead us to Left or Right mistakes. The Draft Programme and the Statement of Policy have not attempted any such assessment without which a correct approach cannot be determined.

1) *Struggle For Peace*: The section on the struggle for peace in the Policy Statement is unsatisfactory. It does not emerge from an analysis of the present international situation, which is missing from the Programme also. The struggle for peace cannot be made real unless an awareness of the great danger of war is there. The Statement of Policy makes a general formulation, which is true for all times, that “the ruling classes, in order to preserve their power, will be ever ready to embroil us, the people, in a war, so that we may give up our war against them”

How the Anglo-American imperialists, specially the American, are desperately driving towards war, seeking to extend the Korean war to other parts of Asia and attack China—without such an analysis a vigorous struggle for peace cannot be conducted.

It is also essential that India's place in the plans of warmongers be studied in detail—to what extent India is fulfilling that role, how the imperialists are plotting to drag us into war. This will make the fight for peace real to us. It will also enable us to assess correctly Nehru's foreign policy.

Since no analysis of the international situation is there, the major task before the world peace movement today, viz., the collection of signature to the appeal for a Pact of Peace is not even mentioned as one of the tasks of the partisans of peace in India.

Further, lack of such an analysis makes our struggle for liberation as something apart from the world-wide struggle for peace.

*J) Fight against American Imperialists:* American Imperialism today has become the greatest menace to mankind. It is madly driving the world to war. It is the spearhead of world reaction. It is threatening the independence of all countries. It is extending its influence in India also. But the Programme and the Policy Statement do not lay down any tasks of fighting American imperialism.

Further, the CPGB Programme visualises a joint strategy for the countries of the British Empire not only against British imperialism but also against American imperialism. This is how R.P.D. explains it:

“The fight of the peoples of the Empire for national independence can no longer be seen in isolation as a fight against British imperialism alone, as in the days when British imperialism was the dominant and most active world imperialist Power. It is now a fight against the bloc of Anglo-American imperialism in which American imperialism is the most powerful and aggressive world imperialist force and British imperialism is the junior partner.

“American imperialism seeks to draw into its orbit the Dominions, specially Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa, to win increasing economic and political influence in India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma, to penetrate the colonial empire and to gain the upper hand in the Middle East. The fight of the people of all these countries for their national independence is necessarily a fight, not only against exploitation and domination by British imperialist interests and their local allies, but equally against penetration and domination by American imperialism and its local backers. This fight requires close association and cooperation for victory, not only in the winning

of national independence but also *after liberation* in preserving that national independence from American imperialist aggression.”

The stand of our Party in regard to this important aspect needs to be clarified.

**K) *Indo-Pak Relations:*** The basis on which friendly relations between India and Pakistan can be established and a Peace Pact signed, has not been indicated either in the Programme or in the Statement of Policy. To say: “Still less is India interested in the wrangling in which the Indian Union and Pakistan are engaged and which is not counteracted on the part of the present Indian Government”, as the Programme does, cannot solve the problem. Also, we *are* interested in these wrangling in so far as they have to be counteracted as they embitter the relations between the countries.

In this connection, the question of Kashmir, which is the biggest single factor standing in the way of Indo-Pak friendship and which the imperialists are exploiting for more direct intervention in our affairs, should also have been taken up and a democratic solution suggested.

**L) *Past Policies:*** The Statement of Policy only acknowledges the mistakes before the Second Party Congress— “the reformist policy pursued by the former Party leadership.” What about the sectarian and adventurist policies pursued after the Second Party Congress which did inestimable damage to the Party and the movement and which created misgivings in the minds of the people about the Party? A frank admission of these mistakes would help us to reforge our links with the masses.

Secondly, to dismiss the period before the Second Party Congress in the way it has been done would amount to ignoring the achievements of that period. Does the sentence quoted above apply only to the period immediately preceding the Second Congress or to the entire period under Joshi’s leadership? Vague generalisations may well lead to harmful results.

**M) *Attitude towards Bourgeoisie and Petty-Bourgeoisie:*** The Statement of Policy confines itself mainly to the need to build working class-peasant unity. It is certainly important to lay

utmost emphasis on this. But a positive approach towards the other classes, which will constitute the United National Front is also necessary. Nowhere in the Statement of Policy, for example, has the national bourgeoisie been mentioned as having a place in the National Front. Nor is the petty-bourgeoisie regarded as having a role to play. Of course, they are there, indirectly, by implication, as coming under anti-feudal, anti-imperialist forces. But that is not enough.

### **On The Draft Programme [Bihar Comrades]**

A MEETING of the thirty leading Kisan comrades of Bihar, held on 2nd to 4th July, 1951, discussed, among other things, the Draft Programme and Policy Statement of the Party, as adopted and released by the PB and the CC. The meeting hailed the publication of these documents as documents of historic significance in the life of the Party and the country which have assessed anew and formulated the fundamental tasks of the people's Democratic Revolution in India and laid down the basic guiding lines of the Party's policy to achieve these tasks. The meeting noted the unifying role that these documents were already playing inside the Party and expressed the hope that they will enable the Party to overcome its internal crisis, unify and consolidate its forces and take its honoured place at the head of the national democratic forces struggling for freedom, democracy and peace.

While basically agreeing with the documents, a number of questions, confusions and different views were expressed in course of the discussion.

1. One of these points is the formulation that the "experience has led them to the conclusion that the Government of the National Congress that rose to power on the basis of the heroic struggles of the masses, was installed there by the consent of the British imperialists ... and our country" (pp. 3-4, Draft Programme). It was argued that so far as the existing consciousness of the people in Bihar is concerned, it will be wrong to ascribe to their experience that the Congress Government "Was installed there by the consent of the British imperialists." No

doubt the people have learnt out of their own experience that the Congress Government is the Government of the Rich—the Zaminders, the Tatas and Birlas. But they continue to hold illusions that the British have gone, that the Congress had driven out the Britishers, that the foreign rule has ended and an Indian Govt. has been established, though it is equally bad. To say that the people have learnt out of their own experience that the Congress Govt. has been installed by the British imperialists is an over-estimation of the popular consciousness and an under-estimation of the capacity of Congress leaders to do freedom demagogy. But despite this over-statement the slogan of replacing the Congress Government corresponds to the present consciousness of the masses.

2. A few comrades suggested to formulate the aim of the Programme differently. Instead of stating that “In the present stage of our development, the Communist Party is not demanding the establishment of Socialism in our country”, they suggested to state that the present stage of our development does not permit the building up of Socialism and Communism, the maximum programme of the Communist Party. Its present programme is the minimum programme for present stage of our development which aims to create prerequisites for building socialism.

3. The point on which maximum confusion prevailed and question and differences were voiced in the discussion was regarding confiscation and nationalisation of capital. Firstly, two interpretations were put to this programmes as formulated in point No. 46 of the Draft Programme. One interpretation was that it means confiscation and nationalisation of British capital only. The other interpretation was that it means confiscation and nationalisation of not only foreign capital but also Indian Big Business capital if the latter is interested in the concerns owned by the British “under the signboard of Indian companies.”

Some comrades expressed the opinion that the programme should also include the confiscation and nationalisation of the capital of the collaborating sections of the Big Business. Some comrades expressed the opinion that the programme should also

include the confiscation and nationalisation of the capital of the monopolist sections of the bourgeoisie. A third opinion on it was that programme should clearly lay down the confiscation and nationalisation of all key industries. Yet another opinion was to specifically mention the confiscation and nationalisation of American capital also.

4. Certain suggestions were made by some comrades in the discussions of the programme of agrarian reforms.

Firstly, the programme should specifically mention that the Zamindars' land will be handed over to agricultural labourers also.

Secondly, peasant proprietorship will be established.

Thirdly, rent system will be abolished and the system of graduated income tax will be established.

Fourthly, along with the programme of improving old and building new irrigation system, the programme of harnessing rivers, protecting from floods and building *bunds* should also be incorporated.

5. The next point on which questions were raised is the unity of Kisan organisations. It was pointed out that the task of TU unity has been stressed in the Policy Statement but why has not the task of KS unity been laid down?

6. Different interpretations were put to the formulation: "rebuild the mass peasant organisations, basing ourselves firmly on the agrarian workers and poor peasants." Discussion of this formulation brought out the differences on the question of separate organisation of agricultural labourers. One view is in favour of separate organisation of agricultural labourers affiliated to the KS. Another view is against setting up separate organisation of agricultural labourers *immediately*.

7. Confusions were also voiced and contradictions were pointed out by some comrades regarding the formulations made about the foreign policy of Nehru Govt. in the Draft Programme and policy Statement.

8. Discussion of the Policy Statement revealed a general opinion that the specific features of Indian path as distinct from the Russian and Chinese path should be more clearly and



concretely brought out in the Policy Statement.

The meeting decided to ask the POC to refer the above-mentioned points to the CC for clarification and explanation. It also made the demand that the CC should make available explanatory notes, articles and reports to fully explain the Draft Programme and Policy Statement.

*[July 8, 1951.]*

## **U.P.C. Resolution On The Draft Programme**

### **SECTION I**

THE Uttar Pradesh Committee of the Communist Party of India hails the Programme as a valuable Marxist document of great historic importance which by defining in clear terms the aims and objectives of Indian revolution in its present stage has facilitated the task of uniting and mobilising the democratic forces of the country.

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### **SECTION II**

The Draft Programme, basing itself not on some abstract and general principles but on analysis of concrete objective situation and existing co-relation of class forces both nationally and internationally, corrects all the major sectarian and reformist deviations prevailing inside the Party and gives correct solutions to the most important problems of revolution.

After describing August 1947 change and the illusions it created, the Programme gives a brilliant and the analyses of the experience of various classes and consequent development in the consciousness of the people and points out.

A. That freeing of our peasant economy from the shackles of feudalism and industrialising the country is the greatest need of the hour and what the revolution has to destroy in its present stage is nothing but imperialism and feudalism.

B. That the grand alliance of workers and peasant, forming the core of anti-imperialist united front led by the working class, will be the main weapon of the revolution.

C. That British capital is the main enemy which must be

isolated for attack and which must be expropriated, and that we must not only differentiate between Indian capital and British capital but also between British capital and capital of other foreign countries in this respect.

D. That all section of peasantry including rich peasants are ground down as before and our main task is to hand over landlords' land to peasant without compensation.

E. That in the present stage of our revolution the entire big bourgeoisie cannot be said to have gone over permanently to the camp of imperialism, and that it is a section of the bourgeoisie which is collaborating with imperialism at present.

F. That Nehru Government is totally in the grip of monopoly financiers, landlords and princes and their foreign British advisers working behind the screen and as such is persuing an extremely reactionary policy hitting all sections of the people.

G. Though the Nehru Government in certain circumstances plays upon Anglo- American contradictions to its own advantage, it essentially carries out the foreign policy of British imperialism.

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Thus the Draft Programme does not only reject the basically wrong, sectarian and adventurist line of the CC but also corrects the understanding of those who on main points were rightly criticising the CC.

A. The June CC, forgetting that the whole of peasantry is ground down as before, wrongly differentiated between various sections of peasantry, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, by preaching that worker-peasant alliance and the hegemony of the proletariat did not need the physical participation of the working class, completely undermined the basis of this alliance.

The Draft Programme not only corrects this sectarian and Narodnik understanding but places an altogether new emphasis on the significance of workers' and peasants' alliance.

B. The June CC not only permanently excluded the whole of big bourgeoisie from anti- imperialist united front but made a present of considerable sections of middle bourgeoisie to the enemy.

The Draft Programme corrects the understanding of the whole

Party regarding the role of big bourgeoisie by pointing out that sections of it, mainly industrial, have an oppositional role.

C. The Draft Programme corrects a very serious mistake of the entire Party which was forgetting that British capital and not American capital is the main enemy of Indian people.

D. The Draft programme corrects the understanding which demanded nationalisation of all key industries by clearly pointing out that at present confiscation and nationalisation of British capital alone is the task.

E. It corrects the deviation of that section of the Party which forget the essential reactionary character of Nehru Government alongwith the deviation of another section which regarded Nehru Government a puppet Government, having no mass base and incapable of exercising any independent pressure to its own advantage.

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### *SECTION III*

The Draft Programme does not confine itself only to the statement that the present stage of our revolution is people's Democratic Revolution and the present Government is to be replaced by a Government of People's Democracy based on a coalition of all anti-imperialist and anti-feudal classes. It elucidates as to what shall be the form of state structure under People's Democracy, how would people exercise their sovereignty and what policies the new Government would adopt towards various classes and their problems, and thus places a mighty weapon in the hands of the Party for the mobilisation of all sections of the people.

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The Draft Programme, though basically correct in all formulations, needs a few elucidation, clarifications and amendments:

A. The programme should give a clear reply to the question how the world democratic forces concretely help Indian liberation struggle and what is the significance of the latter for the final

victory of world democracy. The relation between the world struggle for peace, democracy, and freedom and socialism, and the struggle for India's liberation should be clearly brought out in our programme.

B. Ours is an ancient country with a rich cultural background. Imperialists with the help of all reactionary forces of the country are trying to stifle and strangle our cultural advancement.

The programme must not only point this out but should explain how we propose to rescue our best cultural tradition from the stranglehold of imperialist and feudal reaction and develop and carry forward our rich heritage, defeating all the enemies of our culture.

C. In order to ward off any sectarian and adventurist interpretation, of the programme, following amendments be made in the Draft:

—In Section (2) “has led” should be followed by “and is leading” so that the impression may be removed that what the Draft wants to point out is not the process and the direction but the accomplished fact.

—Alongwith a clear exposition of the essential character of Nehru's foreign policy, an equally clear exposition of all the causes which cause inconsistencies in his foreign policy is necessary.

*[June, 25, 1951]*

### **On The Draft Programme [A Bengal Unit]**

THE unit while supporting the draft Programme and the policy Statement issued by the P.B. in the main, raises the following questions for clarification. We appeal to the P.B. to clarify the points mentioned later so that it be possible for us to take part fully in the discussions properly.

(1) In introducing our phase of the revolution the Draft Programme on page 14, line 4, states: “In view of the backwardness of economic development of India and of the weakness of mass organisation... socialist transformation of our country...” The question arises to the inclusion of the words of the weakness of mass organisation etc.” Can the weakness “of

mass organisation be one of the main factors in determining the phase of revolution? If India had strong mass organisation led by the Party, the economic development being still backward, could we raise the slogan of establishing socialism in India?

If in a economically developed capitalist country the mass organisations be weak, will the slogan of establishing socialism in that country be inopportune? What will be the phase of revolution there ?

(2) What were the main weak points in the political thesis adopted at the Second Party Congress? If it be not stated clearly, there is every chance of committing the same mistakes again.

(3) In characterisation of the class nature of the Nehru Govt. the Draft uses different words in different places, viz.—

(a) “.. this Government of landlords, princes Big Business collaborating with British imperialism... (page 8, para 2).

(b) “ ..landlord capitalist State tied to the foreign imperialists, mainly British...” (page 13, para 1).

(c) “...Govt. run by the landlords and profiteers..” (page 13, para 1).

(d) “...Govt. which is totally in the grip of monopoly financiers, landlords, princes and their foreign British advisers...” (page 5, para 3).

Summing up all these characterisations will it be right to say that it is a Govt. run by the landlords, princes, Big Business, monopoly financiers, capitalist profiteers—*tied to the British imperialists*, the underlined words to be affixed to every word from Big Business to profiteers?

(4) The programme nowhere states of confiscating the capital of 'Big Business'—collaborating with the British imperialists. why? Does it indicate that the Big Business—collaborating with foreign imperialists, mainly British—has got an oppositional role to play?

We do not think so. If we characterise the Govt. as mentioned above, it seems to us that the Big Business or capitalists—tied to the foreign imperialists—can have no interests in the industrialisation of India. This section is our enemy because it

does not and cannot fight feudalism and foreign imperialism. So why be shy of raising the slogan of confiscating the capital belonging to this section of Big Business and monopoly financiers?

(5) Why complete silence on the question of the penetration of American capital in India? We understand that the exploitation by the British capital is real. Yet we think that the masses should have been forewarned about the American capital also.

(6) The programme states of the reconstitution of the provinces on the basis of common language—but it does not touch the question of Bengal and the Punjab. What will be our attitude towards the slogans of ‘United Bengal’ and United Punjab’?

(7) Under the sub-heading “Agricultural Problem” the programme nowhere states clearly and explicitly that the land will be taken from the landlords without any compensation. Why?

(8) Under the sub-heading “Industrial problem” we nowhere find the programme of nationalising the basic industries. By basic industries we mean mines, power, communications. We think that any centralised people’s Govt.. cannot and must not leave these things in the hands of individual owners. We do not think that the consciousness of the Indian people is so low that this programme cannot be realised by the people’s democratic Govt.

(9) Why no programme of initiating the State Sector of industry?

(10) The programme nowhere gives promise to the small manufacturers and industrialists of its assistance. We think that this section will be our ally.

(11) We do not clearly understand what the term “Progressive Income Tax” really means.

### **On Draft Programme [Prem Sagar Gupta, Delhi]**

BASIC formulations in the draft programme are correct and I accept them unreservedly. But there are certain points which I would like to raise.

1) Para 6: “Allocation of Capital Issues” is not in operation in India. We have what is called the “Control of Capital Issues,” which also does not apply to Companies to be floated with an

Authorised Capital of less than 5 lakhs. In practice, however, the bureaucrats do manage to informally suggest to the entrepreneurs coming to them to go and contact their favourite big capitalists first and see if they are interested, but there is no formal thing as Allocation of Capital Issues.

This should be amended appropriately.

2) para 7: Re: the Schemes of "Reconstruction." What is Stated in the Draft is that all are foundering except those that "feed war purposes." Facts on this point are needed. Practically all hydro-electric schemes are no doubt foundering, but what is necessary to show is the relation to war purpose of those schemes that are going ahead.

3) para 18: The word "revolt" used in this para evidently is used as a noun and not as verb. Its meaning should be made clear by adding the word "their" before "revolt" so as to read "their revolt".

4) *In the field of Industry and the labour problem:* In the introduction to this section, it is stated that the foreign Governments pursuing dumping policies flood the country with cheap goods. This is not true. So far as one can see there is no dumping of goods in our country. What our manufacturers suffer from is the foreign competition as such and not dumping.

The words "dumping policies" should be appropriately changed so as to convey the reality of competition alone, as indicated earlier in para 8.

5) *On Foreign Policy:* Para 12: The only reason given for Nehru speaking up against the Atom Bomb etc., is the pressure of the people. That I believe is oversimplification. There are various other factors which play upon Nehru sometimes taking up such stands. His own class interest is one. Fear of the most aggressive war-maniacs is there. Rise of China in the East. Then, another factor must be taken account of, namely, the disintegration in the imperialist camp as a result of the blows of the people's armies on the imperialist armies, inflicting crushing defeats on them, and the consequent isolation of the most aggressive warmongers. It is not accidental that Nehru's pro-

peace stand on China and Korea came on two occasions when the North Korean armies and later the Chinese Volunteers were rapidly pushing back the American armies, threatening them with complete wipe-out.

Comrade RPD in his "Notes" in November *Labour Monthly* has enumerated three factors. The problem cannot be simplified merely by saying that Nehru does this under pressure of the people.

The analysis of the Programme that Nehru plays between the war camp and peace camp, and also between America and Britain, does explain the fact that arising out of the manoeuvres, Nehru can take stand sometimes which is against Britain and pro-America or against the war camp as such and in favour of the peace camp. The analysis does explain Nehru's stand on China and Korea, etc. The very play assumes such possibilities. But this aspect should be categorically stated in the Draft Programme, else the formulations as put at present are likely to be misinterpreted and even a wrong abstract understanding got. The implication of the "play" should be categorically stated.



# **Programme Of The Communist Party Of India Adopted In All India Party Conference held in Calcutta In 1951**

1. When the British imperialist rulers of India established the government of the leadership of the National Congress in Delhi, in August 1947, and the hated British Viceroy and Governors departed from this country, the people of India were led to believe that foreign imperialist rule was at an end, that India had achieved complete independence and freedom and that now the government and the people could work out a happy life for the millions of our countrymen, with our resources of land and labour, our factories and work shops, our immense natural wealth and manpower. We could now set to work to gradually overcome our poverty and guarantee food, housing, clothing and the minimum decencies of life to everyone.

2. Four years of the Nehru Government in power has belied the hopes of the masses in every respect. Experience has led them to the conclusion that the government of National Congress that rose to power on the basis of the heroic struggle of the masses is a government pledged to the protection and preservation of parasitic landlords and the wealth of the princes of India, who for centuries had supported the foreign invaders and jointly with them robbed our people and our country. Experience is also leading them to the conclusion that the government of the National Congress was installed in power by the consent of British imperialists because it was a government pledged to the protection and preservation of foreign British capital in India. In every sphere of life of the masses, the government has failed to carry out its promises to the people. Every day, life for the masses has

worsened while the landlords and profiteers have enriched themselves more and more at the expense of the people.

3. The five million workers manning our factories, railways, mines, shipyards, plantations, etc. are suffering from fall in real wages, rising prices, capitalist rationalisation and unemployment. Their struggles for better wages and conditions are drowned in blood by shooting and police terror. Their fighting trade union organisations are disrupted, divided and suppressed by the government and its henchmen. Demanding increased production in the name of the people the government only imposes worsened conditions of labour on the working class, enabling the profiteers to increase their profits alone.

4. The millions of our peasants constituting eighty percent of our people are ground down as before. Those who have land and can cultivate it, their fruits of labour are looted by the landlord and the money-lender, through exorbitant rents and interests, and by the manoeuvres of the capitalist market and taxes of the State. But three-fourths of the peasantry have practically no land of their own. Those who have no land and find no work live in conditions of perpetual pauperism. And those who do find work on the landlords' and *sowcars'* (money-lenders) estates, as agricultural labourers or poor tenants, have to work like serfs and slaves, hardly getting even a subsistence wage for the family. As a result production of food and industrial raw materials is falling, leading to the worst food crisis in the country and starvation and death to millions. While the government run by the landlords and profiteers shouts about abolition of landlordism, it only hatches schemes of compensation of millions of rupees to those oppressors of the people, to enable them thus to indirectly realise their rent through the State from the toil of the peasant. The struggles of the peasantry for land, for reduction of rent, interest and taxes are also drowned in blood and their organisations suppressed, along with the struggles and organisations of the working class. Whole villages, talukas and districts are handed over to military and police occupation, because the peasants and landless labourers have dared to ask for land, for reduction of rent and interest and for increased wages and the establishment of better conditions.

5. The middle-classes in the towns are faring no better. High cost of living, falling salaries and unemployment is their lot too. The middle-class wage-earners in government services, private offices, banks, insurance companies, commercial concerns, schools and colleges etc., are faced with the same problem of life, as the working class and the toiling peasantry.

6. Even the industrialists, manufacturers and traders are hit by the policies of this government which is totally in the grip of monopoly financiers, landlords and princes and their foreign British advisers, working behind the screen. Allocation of capital issues, raw material, transport, import and export licences, etc., is carried out by the bureaucrats in the government machinery in such a way as to hit the small industrialists and traders and benefit the big monopolists in league with the banks and syndicates of foreign firms.

7. The schemes of "reconstruction", of building irrigation, hydro-electric stations, factories, etc., whether directly by the state or in partnership with private capital are all foundering, except such as feed war purposes. They are turning out to be the means of looting the state budget by foreign firms of experts and suppliers, by high-placed bureaucrats in charge and big speculators on the Stock Exchange. The demand for nationalisation of industries, promoted by the looting of the people by blackmarketeers, is used to swindle the state budget by making it acquire bankrupt or worn out units or participate in bogus schemes, which invariably fail and are then sold out to the government henchmen and private capitalists. The result is that industrialisation of the country which is held at the mercy of the British and the Americans and who certainly are not interested in making India an industrial nation, is making no headway in the hands of this government which is tied to the chariot-wheels of British capital.

8. And whatever industries exist are continually finding themselves in a crisis, because of the growing poverty of the masses, especially the peasantry, does not give them an adequate market inside the country. Outside as well as inside the country, they come up against the competition of foreign firms and other

imperialist masters of the colonial world and thus find themselves in a deadlock.

9. On the top of all this comes the fact that this tottering government in order to keep itself in saddle, when faced with the rising discontent of the masses, suppresses all civil liberties of the people, outlaws political parties and groups, bans trade unions and other people's organisations, imprisons thousands of workers, peasants, students, men and women in prisons and concentration camps. The supreme ruler becomes the police official and the bureaucrat, helped by the local Congress leader and landlord in the whole countryside. No wonder that to maintain such a police state, the burden of taxes increases and more than fifty per cent of the state budget is spent on military and police, prisons and the bureaucracy and not for food and cloth, homes and education, health and sanitation for the people.

10. The people of India are gradually realising the meaning of this state of affairs and are coming to realise the necessity to change this government of landlords and princes, this government of financial sharks and speculators, this government hanging on to the will of the British Commonwealth, the British imperialists. The disillusioned masses are slowly rising in struggle, no longer able to withstand this state of slow starvation and death. They are rising in struggles of the working class in towns and the resistance of the peasantry in the countryside.

11. In order to prevent this growing unity of the people, mainly the unity of the working class and its alliance with the peasantry, the unity of all classes that are interested in ending this government of landlords and princes and the reactionary big bourgeoisie, collaborating with the British imperialists, the present government is utilising other means apart from police repression.

12. Knowing the desire of the people to make our country completely independent of British imperialism, the government has proclaimed India a Republic. But unwilling really to break its ties with imperialism, it has shamelessly proclaimed the Republic to be a part of the Empire!

The membership of the British Empire is not only a formal matter, as is declared. While playing on the rivalries between England and America, to its own advantage in certain circumstances, the government of India essentially carries out the foreign policy of British imperialism. Though it speaks for peace and against the atomic bomb under pressure from the people, who do not want war and want peace, it has not hesitated to send help, even though nominally medical, to the American troops in Korea; it has allowed British imperialists to recruit Gurkhas and Sikhs for the suppression of Malaya's fight for independence; it has allowed landing bases in India for the French planes on their way to fight against the People's Republic of Vietnam. The Indian Navy operates as part of the British Navy and under British Command and the keys to the military technique of the Defence Department of the government are held and moved by British advisers. If the independence of the armed forces of a country is a sign of its sovereignty and independence, then the key part of our independence is still left in the hands of British imperialism.

In addition to this subservience to British imperialists, the policies of the government of India are leading to penetration of American imperialists into our economy and life, into the affairs of State and threaten us with added slavery to American capital.

13. The British imperialists before hiding their hold under the mantle of the new Congress government drowned the country in Hindu-Muslim strife and massacres and then divided the country into the two states of India and Pakistan. The imperialists thereby weakened the economy of India in agriculture and the economy of Pakistan in industry. It thus put both the States at loggerheads and undeclared war with each other and dependent on the so-called "neutral third party", the imperialists.

The division of the country enabled the Congress government to drown the just demands of the people in a hysteria of Hindu-Muslim war. It enabled the government to spend on armaments the money which could have been used to improve the conditions of the people. It enabled them to buy armaments from the British imperialists who desired nothing better than to sell their second-

hand goods and services in exchange for its sterling debts to India and Pakistan, and to deprive our people of supplies of machinery and essential goods.

14. The division of the country and communal religious strife was used to drown the demands of the various nationalities of India for their free development, for the reconstitution of the former mixed British provinces and the princely states into autonomous linguistic provinces in a united India. In the name of a united country, the language of a part of the country, namely, Hindi, was declared an obligatory state language for all nationalities and states, to the detriment of their own national language. Vast areas and millions of people of one nationality are compelled to live under the rule of bureaucrats and governments dominated by another nationality. Large tribal areas, with their own economy and culture are put at the mercy of the landlords and financial sharks of this or that alien group, thus utilising the desire of the masses for a united country to actually sow division and discord among its people.'

15. In order, finally, to come forward as a government of the people, after spending millions of the people's money on wrangling in legislative houses, the government produced what it calls a democratic constitution and in terms of that constitution calls upon the people to elect a government of their own choice and realise the fundamental rights given under the constitution. Thus the people are told that they can end the present rule of autocracy if they so desire and work their freedom through this "democratic" constitution of the free Republic of India.

16. While it is a fact that universal adult franchise now exists in the constitution of India and it can and will be used by the people, it is a deception of the people to say that elections alone under this constitution can end the landlord-capitalist rule in the country and the imperialist hold over its life. Adult franchise serves to gauge the maturity of the workingclass and the people and is formally an element of democracy but it cannot express the true will and the true interests of the exploited masses as long as the land is not the property of peasants but that of the landlords, as long as the power of landlords and capitalists holds

the people in subjugation in fields and factories, so long as the power of capital over the press and means of propaganda drugs the people with lies, so long as the power of money utilises religious and caste frictions and rivalries to divide and to weaken the people, so long as the bureaucrats and the police ban political parties, suppress civil liberties and imprison without trial even the elected representatives of the legislatures for their political opinions and for their honest work.

17. It is also a deception of the people to say that under the new constitution the masses or the government elected by them can work their way to freedom and happiness. The constitution guarantees no rights to the people which are enforceable in any way or which are not subject to violation by the emergency autocratic decrees of the bureaucracy which is irremovable and inviolate. The right to strike, to living wage, to work and rest for the working class and salaried employees is not guaranteed and made enforceable. The land of the landlords and the properties and incomes of the dethroned or enthroned princes are made inviolable. The landless peasant can have land, it appears, but only if he can buy it or compensate the landlord for it. But to buy land and to pay compensation, capital is needed, and tens of millions of poor peasants who live from hand to mouth have no capital. Therefore, the poor peasants have to stay without land and continue their existence in poverty. It is characteristic that by several treaties with Britain and America, the government has made the property of foreign holders in our country sacred and inviolable, having provided them with such guarantees that even their profits cannot be touched and have to be let out of the country in the way they like. And this at a time when the government refuses to guarantee the citizens from the club-law of the police officers and from the plunder on the part of the money-lenders and profiteers.

Thus while the stranglehold of landlords, princes and imperialists on our economy, land and capital is guaranteed by this constitution not a single item of the life and liberty of our masses is guaranteed, beyond stating them as pious illusory wishes. The constitution is not and cannot be called a truly

democratic constitution but is a constitution of a landlord-capitalist state, tied to foreign imperialist interests—mainly British.

18. It is quite natural that in view of the terrible conditions described above, dooming the people to poverty and subjecting them to a lawless regime, the people have lost their faith in the present government, they are becoming deeply distrustful of it and start to consider it their enemy who is protecting the landlords, money-lenders and other exploiters against the people. Moreover, the masses of the people openly voice their discontent and revolt in several provinces against the inhuman regime of the present government and are seeking out ways to substitute this government by a new people's government able to express the will and interests of the people, able to protect it against the oppression of landlords, capitalists, profiteers, money-lenders and foreign imperialists.

19. Faced with these facts, the Communist Party of India feels it its duty to outline to the people the practical tasks, the practical programme which the Communist Party of India upholds and which should be put into effect by the people of India if they wish to come out of the deadlock into which they have been forced by the present government, if they wish to attain their freedom and happiness.

While adhering to the aim of building a socialist society the Communist Party is not demanding the establishment of socialism in our country in the present stage of our development. In view of the backwardness of the economic development of India and of the weakness of the mass organisations of workers, peasants and toiling intelligentsia, our Party does not find it possible at present to carry out socialist transformations in our country. But, our Party regards as quite mature the task of replacing the present anti-democratic and anti-popular government by a new government of People's Democracy created on the basis of a coalition of all democratic anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces in the country, capable of effectively guaranteeing the rights of people, of giving land to the peasants gratis, of protecting our national industries against the competition of foreign goods and



of ensuring the industrialisation of the country, of securing a higher standard of living to the working class, of ridding the people of unemployment and thus placing the country on the wide road of progress, cultural advancement and independence.

What are the practical tasks which, in the opinion of the Communist Party of India, should be carried out by the new People's Democratic Government?

These tasks are as follows:

### **In The Field Of State Structure**

20. The sovereignty of the people, *i.e.* the concentration of all power in the country in the hands of the people. The supreme power in the state must be vested entirely in the people's representatives who will be elected by the people and be subject to recall at any time upon a demand by the majority of electors and who shall constitute a single popular assembly, a single legislative chamber.

21. The restriction of the rights of the President of the Republic, in virtue of which the President and persons authorised by him will be deprived of the right to promulgate laws, which have not been passed by the legislature. The President shall be elected by the legislature.

22. Universal, equal and direct suffrage for all male and female citizens of India who have attained the age of eighteen years in all elections to the Legislative Assembly and to the various local government bodies; secret ballot, the right of every voter to be elected to any representative institution, payment to people's representatives, proportional representation of political parties in all elections.

23. Local government on a wide scale and with wide powers through People's Committees. The abolition of all local and provincial authorities appointed from above (e.g. governors, magistrates, commissioners, etc.).

24. Inviolability of person and domicile; unhampered freedom of conscience, religious belief and worship, speech, press, assembly, strike and combination; freedom of movement and occupation.

25. Equal rights for all citizens irrespective of religion, caste, sex, race or nationality, equal pay for equal work, irrespective of sex.

Social disabilities from which women suffer shall be abolished and they shall be given protection to secure and exercise equal rights with men in such matters as inheritance of property, marriage and divorce laws, entrance to professions and service, etc.

Social and economic oppression of one caste by another or social and personal bans and prohibitions imposed by the so-called upper castes on the lower castes, especially the Scheduled Castes, in the name of custom, tradition or religion shall be abolished and made punishable by law.

Religious minorities shall be given protection against discrimination.

26. The right of all nationalities to self-determination. The Republic of India will unite the peoples of the various nationalities of India not by force but by their voluntary consent to the creation of a common state.

27. The present boundaries of the states in the Indian Union shall be recast and states shall be reconstituted according to the principle of common language. Princely states, where existing, shall be dissolved into the appropriate adjoining national states, and the foreign possessions shall be restored to the country and reconstituted on the same principle. The tribal areas or areas where the population is specific in composition and is distinguished by specific social conditions or constitutes a national minority will have complete regional autonomy and regional governments, and full assistance for their development.

28. Introduction of progressive income tax in industry, agriculture and trade and maximum relief in taxation for workers, peasants and artisans.

29. Right of people to receive instruction in their mother-tongue in educational institutions; the use of the national language of the particular state in all its public and state institutions; provision for the use of the language of a minority or region,

where necessary, in addition to the national language. Use of Hindi as an all-India state language will not be obligatory. In Hindusthani-speaking areas, safeguard and protection to Urdu and Devnagri scripts and the right of the people to use either of the two scripts.

30. Measures to foster, encourage and develop such literature, art and culture as will:

—help each nationality including the tribal people to develop their language and culture in their own way and in unison with the common aspirations of the democratic masses of the country as a whole;

—help the democratic masses in their struggle to improve their living conditions and enrich their life;

—help the toiling people to get rid of caste and communal hatred and prejudices and ideas of fear, subservience and superstition traditionally inculcated in them by the landlord-bourgeois classes;

—help all people grow feelings of brotherhood with the peace-loving people of all countries and discourage ideas of racial and national hatred;

—discourage imperialist war propaganda and help people to realise peace and freedom for all.

31. The right of all persons to sue any official before a People's Court.

32. Separation of the State from all religious institutions. The State to be a secular state

33. Free and compulsory primary education for the children of both sexes up to the age of fourteen.

34. Replacement of the police by militia. Elimination of the mercenary army and other punitive forces and the establishment of a national army, navy and air force for the defence of India, closely linked with the people.

35. The establishment of the people's health service with a wide network of medical centres and hospitals all over the country designed to liquidate the centres of cholera, malaria and other epidemic diseases in the country.

## **In The Field Of Agriculture And The Peasant Problem**

The agriculture and the peasant problem are of primary importance to the life of our country.

We cannot develop agriculture to any considerable extent and provide the country with food and raw materials because the impoverished peasantry deprived of land is unable to purchase the most elementary agricultural implements and thus to improve its farming.

We cannot develop our national industries and industrialise our country to any considerable extent because the impoverished peasantry constituting 80 per cent of the population is unable to buy even a minimum quantity of manufactured goods.

We cannot make our state stable to any extent because the peasantry living in conditions of semi-starvation receives no support from the Government, hates it and refuses to support it.

We cannot improve the conditions of the working class to any considerable extent because hundreds of thousands of hungry people forced by poverty to leave the countryside for towns swarm the "labour market", lower "prices of labour", increase the army of unemployed and thus make the improvement of the living standards of the working people impossible.

We cannot work our way out of cultural backwardness because the peasantry, living in conditions of semi-starvation, constituting the overwhelming majority of the population, is deprived of any material means to give education to its children.

In order to get rid of all these evils and get our country out of cultural backwardness, it is necessary to create human conditions of existence for the peasants, it is necessary to take land from the landlords and hand it over to the peasants.

To achieve this, it is necessary:

36. To hand over landlords' land without payment to the peasants including agricultural labourers and to legalise this reform in the form of a special land law and thus realise abolition of landlordism without compensation.

37. To ensure a long-term and cheap credit for the peasants to enable them to purchase agricultural implements and the necessary seeds. To ensure long term and cheap credit to small

artisans to enable them to purchase raw materials, etc., and carry on their manufacture and trade.

38. To ensure government assistance to the peasants in the improvement of old and the building of new irrigation systems.

39 To cancel debts of peasants and small artisans to money-lenders.

40 To ensure adequate wages and living conditions to agricultural labourers.

### **In The Field Of Industry And The Labour Problem**

Our national industry suffers not only from an extremely low purchasing power of the peasants but also from the fact that it is exposed to competition on the part of foreign goods in the country. Manufacturers who are not protected by the government from ruinous foreign competition, try to make good their losses which arise from this competition by increasing pressure on the working class, by worsening its conditions. But the industries cannot develop if the living conditions of the workers deteriorate, for a hungry and moneyless worker cannot be an adequate factor for the development of modern industry. This circumstance is another reason for the insufficient development of our national industry. To break through this vicious circle, it is necessary to guard our national industry against the competition of foreign goods, to launch an all-out industrialisation of the country and to improve the conditions of the working class. The Communist Party of India considers that to achieve this, it is necessary :

41 To provide for the protection of the national industry against the competition of foreign goods in the country by promulgating appropriate laws

42. To develop the national industry and to prepare conditions for the industrialisation of the country without sparing any efforts and resources of the state to achieve this end.

43 To regulate and coordinate the various sectors of economy in order to achieve a planned economic development of the country in the interests of the people.

44 To improve radically the living and working conditions of workers by fixing a living wage, application of the eight-

hour day and forty-four hour week in all industries and trades, introduction of a six-hour day in underground mines and other trades injurious to health, social insurance at the expense of the state and capitalists against every kind of disability and unemployment, establishment of labour exchanges working in association with Trade Unions, establishment of industrial courts, recognition of Trade Unions, the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike.

45. To introduce effective control of prices of goods of mass consumption.

46. The problem of the refugee population, mainly of the millions of the uprooted workers, peasants, artisans, middle-class employees, etc., must be resolved by their speedy rehabilitation by the State and specially by providing them with land, instruments of labour, employment and facilities for developing their life in their own national way.

### **National Independence For India**

In spite of the much-advertised statement that the British have left our country, it is a fact that a large number of factories and work shops, mines and plantations, shipping and banking of India are owned by the British capitalists who annually draw hundreds of millions of profit from them. With this power over our economic life and their ties and partnership with the big capitalists in our country who are collaborating with them, the British imperialists from behind the scene and their collaborators hamper the development of our industries and thus perpetuate our poverty.

We cannot be a strong and prosperous country until we are industrialised on a wide scale; but industrialised to such an extent we shall never be as long as British capital exists in India, for the profits of British enterprises are taken out of the country and we are unable to use them to expand our industries, as long as the big national capitalists, their collaborators, keep us tied to the Empire.

Moreover, one has to take into account the numerous British advisers with whom our navy, our army, police and other punitive organ . teem.

To become a truly independent state, India has to break with the Empire, to put an end to the domination of the British capital in the country's economy and to get rid of the British advisers.

Therefore, the Communist Party of India considers necessary:

47. The withdrawal of India from the British Commonwealth of Nations and the British Empire.

48. The confiscation and nationalisation of all factories, banks, plantations, shipping and mining owned by the British in India, whether in their own name or under the signboard of Indian companies.

49. Removal of the British advisers in India from the posts held by them.

### **Foundation Of The Foreign Policy Of India**

India needs peace and peaceful development. She is interested in peace and economic co-operation with all states. In this respect, Britain is not an exception if she only proves capable of carrying on economic co-operation with India on the basis of full equality. The spurious play between peace and war, between partisans of peace and advocates of aggressive war, carried on by the present Indian government, is not in India's interests.

The chief enemy of peace and advocate of an aggressive war is now the United States of America which has rallied round herself all aggressive countries. This camp of war is facing the camp of peace which includes such states as the Soviet Union, the Chinese People's Republic and other countries of People's Democracy. Instead of joining hands with the partisans of peace against the aggressors and branding the United States of America as chief aggressor, the Indian government is carrying on a suspicious play between these two camps, and is flirting with the USA thus facilitating the struggle of aggressors against peace-loving countries. What India needs is not play between peace and war, but a united front with peace-loving countries and friendship with them.

Still less in India's interests is the wrangling in which the Indian Union and Pakistan are engaged and which is not counteracted on the part of the present Indian government.

The unbalancing of the integral economy of India caused by the division of the country, the strife between Pakistan and India, which enables the reactionary ruling circles to divide the people and provides the American and British imperialists with opportunities for intervention, as in Kashmir, and for increasing their domination over both, will be overcome by a firm alliance of friendship and mutual assistance between India and the State of Pakistan. India must also enter into friendly alliance with the States of Ceylon and Nepal.

The economy of Ceylon is dependent on and complementary to that of India. Quite a large section of its people are formed from Indian plantation and other workers who have migrated to Ceylon. The Ceylonese and Indian landlords and traders incite the Indian and Ceylonese workers against each other to gain their selfish ends. The absence of alliance is utilised by the imperialist and their henchmen to sow discord among all these states and to sow hatred among their people's, leading to the eviction of millions of people from their homeland. Only a firm alliance and friendship can defeat this game of imperialists and the reactionary ruling circles of these countries.

Therefore, the Communist Party of India considers it necessary to guarantee the following :

50. Honest and consistent policy of peace in alliance with all peace-loving states and united front with them against aggressors.

51. The policy of economic co-operation with all states capable of carrying on economic co-operation without any discrimination whatsoever on the basis of full equality.

52. The policy of alliance and friendship with Pakistan, Ceylon, and Nepal.

53. The policy of doing its utmost to protect the legitimate rights and interests of Indians residing abroad.

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The Communist Party of India puts this programme before the people of India, in order that they may have a clear picture of the objective they are fighting for.

Our Party calls upon the toiling millions, the working class, the peasantry, the toiling intelligentsia, the middle-classes as well as the national bourgeoisie interested in the freedom of the



country and the development of prosperous life—to unite into a single democratic front in order to attain complete independence of our country, the emancipation of the peasants from the oppression of the feudals, improvement in the life of all working people, to bring about a major forward stride in our agriculture, a major forward stride in our national industry and secure the cultural advancement of our country.

The people of India led by its working class and its Communist Party, guided by the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, firmly allied with the million-headed peasantry of our land will achieve this programme. The principles and the philosophy of Marxism and the leadership of the Communist Party have led nearly half of humanity of Socialism, to freedom, to real democracy, at the head of which stands the Soviet Union. The peoples of Asia led by the great Chinese People's Democracy are now battling to free themselves from imperialism. India is the last biggest dependent semi-colonial country in Asia still left for the enslavers to rob and exploit. But the Communist Party believes that India too will soon take its place in the great nations of the world as a victorious People's Democracy and take the road of peace, prosperity and happiness.

# **Statement of Policy of the Communist Party of India Adopted in All India Party Conference held in Calcutta in 1951**

## **Our Objective**

The experience of the last four years has taught the people of our country that the present government and the present system cannot solve their main problems of life. It cannot give them land and bread, work and wages, peace and freedom. They are coming to realise the necessity of changing the present government, which mainly serves the interests of feudal landlords and big monopoly financiers and the hidden power behind them all, the vested interests of British imperialism.

The Communist Party, therefore, has adopted a program in which it says, that it “regards as quite mature the task of replacing the present anti-democratic and anti-popular government by a new government of people’s democracy”.

Who should form such a government? The program says that it will be created “on the basis of a coalition of all democratic, anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces in the country”.

And this government and the forces who form it must be “capable of effectively guaranteeing the rights of the people, of giving land to the peasants gratis, of protecting our national industries against competition of foreign goods and of ensuring the industrialisation of the country, of securing a higher standard of living to the working class, of ridding the people from unemployment and thus placing the country on the wide road of progress, cultural advancement and independence”. Thus the program outlines the practical tasks which have to be carried out by the people’s democratic government.

The immediate main objective being defined, the question then asked is: how is it to be achieved, with what methods, what forces?

### **Our Past Policies**

There are a large number of people who think that this government can be replaced by a people's democratic government by utilising the parliament ushered in by the new constitution. Such feelings are encouraged and fed not only by this government and the vested interests but even by the rightwing socialists, who preach that the very fact of a strong opposition party on the parliamentary floor will shake the government and make it topple down.

But hardly had the people started to believe in the efficacy of the new constitution, which they thought was the outcome of their anti-imperialist struggles of the past, than even the fiction of the fundamental rights and guarantees is thrown out of that very constitution and the freedom of person, the press, speech and assembly, which the masses wanted to use to shake up this anti-democratic government, are subjected to the rule of the police baton and the bureaucrat. Even a liberal would now feel ashamed to maintain, let alone the Communist Party and other democrats and revolutionaries, that this government and the classes that keep it in power will ever allow us to carry out a fundamental democratic transformation in the country by parliamentary methods alone. Hence the road that will lead us to freedom and peace, land and bread, as outlined in the program of the party, has to be found elsewhere.

*History, enlightened for us by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin,* places before us its vast experience, arising out of struggles which have led nearly half of humanity to socialism, freedom and real democracy, at the head of which stands the Soviet Union and in which the great Chinese and people's democracies join hands.

Thus our main road is already charted out for us. Even then each country has to seek its own path also. What is the path for us?

The communists in India have been working with the people for the last thirty years first as communist groups and later a party. During these years they built a mighty movement of the

working class, fought their struggles and won their demands. They built a kisan movement and in vast areas, as for example in Telangana, led them out of landlessness to land and from forced labour to freedom. They have fought for the rights of the people, and in these struggles hundreds and thousands have been killed, hanged, imprisoned, tortured and ruined. Naturally, while leading the working masses, many a time, at crucial points in our history, we were confronted with the question, which path to follow, what tactic would best secure the interests of the country and the people?

We do not refer here to the path that we traversed all these years, except in recent times, so that we can be clear as to what the path would be henceforth to lead us to achieve the program.

After the second party congress, differences and controversies arose inside the party about the path that the Indian revolutionary movement must adopt. For a time it was advocated that the main weapon in our struggle would be the weapon of general strike of industrial workers followed by countrywide insurrection as in Russia. Later, on the basis of a wrong understanding of the lessons of the Chinese revolution, the thesis was put forward that since ours is a semi-colonial country like China, our revolution would develop in the same way as in China, with partisan war of the peasantry as its main weapon.

Among comrades who at different periods accepted the correctness of the one or the other of these views, there were differences on the estimate of the situation in the country, on the degree of isolation of the present government from the people, and on many other vital issues. It was clear that these differences had to be resolved in order that the party could lead the people to victory.

After long discussions, *running for several months*, the party has now arrived at a new understanding of the correct path for attaining the freedom of the country and the happiness of the people, a path which we do not and cannot name as either Russian or Chinese. It should be, and is, one that conforms to the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, and that utilises the lessons *given by all the struggles of history, especially the Russian and Chinese, the Russian because it was the first socialist revolution*

in the world carried out by the working class under the leadership of the Communist Party of Lenin and Stalin in a capitalist and imperialist country; and the Chinese because, it was the first people's democratic revolution in a semi-colonial, dependent country, under the leadership of the Communist Party, in which even the national bourgeoisie took part. At the same time one has to remember that every country has its own peculiarities, natural and social, which cannot fail to govern its path to liberation.

In what way then shall our path be different from the Chinese path?

### **China And India : Similarity And Difference: Our Perspective**

First, let us see where we are the same as the Chinese. It is in the character of our revolution. The thing of primary importance for the life of our country, same as the Chinese, is agriculture and the peasant problem. We are essentially a colonial country, with a vast majority of our people living on agriculture. Most of our workers also are directly connected with the peasantry and interested in the problem of land.

Our real freedom today means taking the land from the feudal landlords and handing it over without payment to the peasant. This anti-feudal task, when fulfilled, alone will mean the real liberation for our country because the main props of imperialist interests in our country, as they were in China are the feudal. So, like in Chinese, we have to fight feudalism and imperialism. Our revolution is anti-feudal, anti-imperialist.

That makes the struggles of the peasantry of prime importance. Drawing upon the fact that in China the liberation war was fought mainly on the basis of the partisan struggles of the peasantry, during which the peasants took land from the feudal landlords, and in the process created the liberation army, it was asserted that in India too the path will be the same, the path of partisan struggles of the peasantry would almost alone lead us to liberation.

*The CC finds that drawing upon the Chinese experience in this way and to come to such a conclusion would mean neglecting*

to look into other factors of the Chinese revolution and also neglecting to look into our own specific conditions. For example:

We cannot fail to take note of the fact that when the Chinese party began to lead the peasantry in the liberation struggle, it had already an army which it inherited from the split in the revolution of 1925.

We cannot fail to note the fact that China had no unified and good communications system, which prevented the enemy from carrying out concentrated and swift attacks on the liberation forces. India is different in this respect from China in that it has a comparatively more unified, well-organised and far-flung system of communication.

India has a far bigger working class than China had during its march to freedom.

Further we cannot fail to note the fact that the Chinese red army was surrounded and threatened with annihilation again and again until it reached Manchuria. There, with the industrial base in hand, and the great friendly Soviet Union in the rear, the Chinese liberation army, free from the possibility of any attack in the rear, rebuilt itself and launched the final offensive which led it to victory. The geographical situation in India in this respect is altogether different.

This does not mean that there is nothing in common between us and China except the stage of our revolution and its main tasks. On the contrary, like China, India is of vast expanses. Like China, India has a vast peasant population. Our revolution, therefore, will have many features in common with the Chinese revolution. But peasant struggle as along the Chinese path alone cannot lead to victory in India.

Moreover we must bear in mind that the Chinese party stuck to the peasant partisan war alone, not out of a principle, but out of sheer necessity. In their long-drawn struggles, the party and peasant bases got more and more separated from the towns and the working class therein, which prevented the party and the liberation army from calling into action the working class in factories, shipping and transport to help it against the enemy.

Because it happened so with the Chinese, why make their necessity into a binding principle for us and fail to bring the working class into practical leadership and action in our liberation struggle?

Such an outlook ignores the fact that we have a big working class and that it has a role to play, which can be decisive in our struggle for freedom. The grand alliance of the working class and the peasantry, acting in unison, the combination of workers' and peasants' struggles, under the leadership of the Communist Party, and utilising all lessons of history for the conduct of the struggles, is to be the path for us.

It can thus be seen that while the previous line of reliance on the general strike in the cities neglected the role of the peasantry, the subsequent one of partisan struggle minimised the role of the working class, which in practice meant depriving the peasantry of its greatest friend and leader. The working class remained leader only 'in theory', only through the party, because the party is defined as the party of the working class.

Both the lines in practice meant ignoring the task of building the alliance of the working class and the peasantry, as the basis of the united national front, ignoring the task of building the united national front, ignoring the task of putting the working class at the head of this front in the liberation struggle.

This, it has to be realised, was a wrong approach. The leadership of the working class is not realised only through the party and its leadership of the present struggle but actually, in deeds, through the working class boldly championing the demands of the peasantry and coming to the assistance of the peasant struggle through its own action. The alliance must function indeed and fact, and not only in theory. The working class is the friend in action that must help the fighting peasants and must ensure victory over the common enemy.

The working class, relying on agricultural workers and poor peasants, in firm alliance with the peasantry, together with the whole people, leads the battles in towns and rural areas to liberation, to land and bread, to work and peace.

The CC wishes to convey to comrades this great lesson of history, a lesson which is neither only the Russian path nor the Chinese path, but a path of Leninism applied to Indian conditions.

Such an understanding of our perspective gives us a new outlook on how to build our mass movement, our trade unions, Kisan Sabhas and also a new way to build the party.

The understanding will also show to comrades that the main question is not, whether there is to be armed struggle or not, the main question is not whether to be nonviolent or violent. It is the reactionary ruling classes who resort to force and violence against the people and who pose for us the question whether our creed is violence or non-violence. Such a poser is a poser of Gandhian ideology, which in practice misleads the masses and is a poser of which we must steer clear. Marxism and history have once for all decided the question for the party and the people of every country in the world long ago. All action of the masses in defence of their interests to achieve their liberation is sacrosanct. History sanctions all that the people decide to do to clear the lumber-load of decadence and reaction in their path to progress and freedom.

This should also tell us that all our previous understanding have to be discarded as being one-sided and defective.

### **Combat Individual Terrorism**

But one action history does not sanction and that is individual terrorism.

Individual terrorism is directed against individuals of a class or system and is carried out by individuals or groups and squads. The individuals who act may be heroic and selfless and applauded or even invited by the people to act and the individuals against whom they act the most hated. Still such actions are not permissible in Marxism. And why? For the simple reason that therein the masses are not in action. Therein the belief is fostered that the heroes will do the job for the people. Therein it fosters the belief that many more such actions will mean in sum total the annihilation of the classes or the system. Ultimately it leads to passivity and inertia of the masses, stops their own action and development towards revolution and in the end results in defeat. Hence Marxism warns against individual terrorism and bans it.



### **Immediate Situation And Tasks**

The question that now remains, and an important one is—we have got the path and the perspective, but what now? The question of the immediate, while certainly influenced by the perspective, is not solely determined by it. It is also governed by the assessment of the present situation. How far is the government isolated, how far are the people disillusioned, how far are they ready to struggle, are some of the questions that determine the immediate tasks and slogans for them.

Some say that the government is thoroughly discredited and isolated, the people are ready to rise in revolt and in place are clashing with the government, which with the blatant rule of police firing has already created conditions of civil war in the country. Hence all our work must be guided by such an understanding of the situation. We do not think it necessary to argue the question in detail.

No doubt the crisis of the government is deep, but it is not yet thoroughly isolated. As the program of the party puts it: “the masses have lost faith in the present government, they are becoming deeply distrustful of it and start to consider it their enemy, who is protecting the landlords, moneylenders and other exploiters the people”. Hence “the masses are slowly rising in struggle, no longer able to withstand this state of slow starvation and death”. But it would be gross exaggeration to say that the country is already on the eve of armed insurrection or revolution, or that civil war is already raging in the country. If we were to read the situation so wrongly, it would lead us into adventurism and giving slogans to the masses out of keeping with the degree of their understanding and consciousness and their preparedness, and the government’s isolation. Such slogans would isolate us from the people and hand over the masses to reformist disruptors.

Equally wrong are they who see only the disunity of the popular forces, only the offensive of reaction and advocate a policy of retreat in the name of regrouping of forces, of eschewing all militant actions on the plea that this will invite repression. Tactics based on such an understanding of the situation will lead to betrayal of the masses and surrender before the enemy.

We have to lead the struggles of the people in the context of a sober evaluation of the situation. While it should not lead us into adventurism, we must also not forget that the crisis is not being solved but is growing. Hence we cannot take a leisurely attitude and behave as if no deep crisis is moving the people and furious struggle are not looming ahead. Because insurrection and civil war do not exist, some would like to move and work as if they are living in a democracy with rights and liberties and nothing need be done to protect the party and the leadership of mass organisation from onslaughts of the law run mad. With such an outlook, we shall get smashed and will be able to build nothing.

But because the crisis is growing, and even a simple food procession like the one in Cooch-Bihar to firing and brings thousands on the streets, some would like to do away with the daily humdrum task of running mass organisations. Taking fascism to be inevitable or already in power, they would scoff at parliamentary elections or fighting for civil liberties, for which broad sections of the people can and should be mobilised.

We have to realise that although the masses are getting fast radicalised and moving into action in many parts of the country, the growth of the mass movement has not kept pace with the growth of discontent against the present government and its policies and methods. To ascribe this to repression alone would be wrong. This weakness of the mass movement is due, above all, to the weakness of our party and the division in the camp of progressive forces. The party therefore must strive to overcome this division and must stress the supreme need for unity of all progressive forces, build this unity in action and itself grow into a mass party by drawing into its fold the best elements from the fighting masses.

We must fight the parliamentary elections and elections in every sphere where the broad strata of the people can be mobilised and their interests defended. We must be wherever the masses are and would like us to be.

## **Role Of Working Class Unity And The Party**

The party has to build the unity of the working class and make it conscious of its tasks in relation to our entire people. The existing split in the working class movement which hampers the development of working class struggles must be overcome at all costs in the possible time and united mass organisations of the working class built.

The class has also to be made politically conscious. Only a united and politically conscious working class can fulfil the role of the leadership of the people.

We have to rouse all the sections of the peasantry, including rich peasants, for the struggle for agrarian reform and in the course of this struggle rebuild the mass peasant organisations, basing ourselves firmly on the agricultural workers and poor peasants who together constitute the majority of our agrarian population.

It must be understood that because of the vast expanse of our country, because of the uneven development of the agrarian crisis and of the working class and peasant movement, and the uneven state of organisation and consciousness of the peasant masses and the influence of the party, peasant movement will develop at the same tempo everywhere and different forms and organisation and struggle will have to be adopted depending on the maturity of the crisis, the degree of unification of the peasant masses and their mood, the strength and influence of the party, and other factors.

All these tasks call for the most intense, patient and daily work among the masses, continuous agitation on our basic program and immediate simple demands of the people, a concrete working out of such demands for every section of the people according to general and local conditions, practical leadership of mass struggles, a combination of various forms of struggles, and a systematic building up of a network of mass organisations.

Above all, it is necessary to build up through patient struggle a communist party, equipped with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, a party mastering strategy and tactics, a party

practising self-criticism and a strict discipline and which is closely linked with the masses.

The mass organisations and the party that are built up must also be able to withstand the fire of repression to which the government continually subjects them and the people's movement.

### **Struggle For Peace**

One of the key tasks that faces us in defence of the people is the building of the peace movement. The struggle for peace must become an integral part of our work in all mass organisations, on all platforms. We have to bring it to the active consciousness of masses that the ruling classes, in order to preserve their power, will ever be ready to embroil us, the people, in a war so that we may give up our war against them. We must bring to the consciousness of the people the immense danger of the outbreak of a third world war and the possibilities of averting that danger, if the people will it. We must bring into the consciousness of the people that while we support any move of any class or group including this government for preserving peace, yet we must not forget that this government under the influence of imperialist warmongers, landlords and profiteers follows not a consistent and honest policy of peace but plays between America and England to gain from their rivalries and also plays between the peace-loving countries and warmongers. Such inconsistency must be overcome by the action of the masses. We must fight for a pact of peace between Pakistan, India and Ceylon, for banning of the atom bomb and reduction of armaments and military budget. We must above all fight for the conclusion of a pact of peace between the five great powers. The peace movement must be made real to the masses in terms of their own problems of land and bread, work and wages, and prosperity for all.

The peace movement must mobilise widest opposition to the colonial wars waged by British, French, Dutch and American imperialists in South-east Asia and prevent all direct and indirect support to these imperialist given by the present Indian government.

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The program that the Communist Party has placed before the people is a program which conforms to the interest of all progressive forces and classes in the country, of all sections who desire India to be free, happy and strong. We shall therefore strive to unite our entire people for the realisation of this program and build their unity in action on all issues facing them. We shall strive to develop the struggles of all sections of our people and merge them into the common movement for freedom, democracy and peace.

While carrying out these tasks, we must learn skilfully to combine the struggle of workers, peasants and other classes and sections in each province and district, and in the country as a whole. From all these struggles, the heroic fighters that will come forth must be transformed into the makers and builders of the party, which then alone will become a real mass party and yet a well-knit party of tested and tried revolutionaries. With the perspective and path clear, and immediate tasks outlined, we shall surely succeed in our liberation struggle against our feudal and imperialist enslavers and replace this anti-democratic government by a government of people's democracy.

## **Telangana People's Armed Liberation Struggle (\*)**

- (A) The Peasant Upsurge in Telangana and the Communist Party of India**
- (B) Armed Resistance Movement Against Nizam and Rajakars**
- (C) Telangana People's Armed Liberation Struggle Against Nizam—its Achievements**
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**(\*) Taken from : “Telangana People's Struggle And Its Lessons”  
written by P. Sundarayya. This Book is the only authoritative  
history of ‘Telangana People's Armed Liberation Struggle’.**

## The Peasant Upsurge in Telangana and the Communist Party of India\*

During the whole period of 1940-44, the party and the left cadre of the Andhra Mahasabha carried on agitation and made representations, to see that whichever *firman*s of the Nizam that favoured the people, were put into practice and not sabotaged by the landlords and the corrupt officials. This enabled it to gain a wide popular image and the left wing led by our Party took over the leadership of the Andhra Mahasabha.

From the beginning of 1944, the Andhra Mahasabha under the leadership of the Communist Party conducted many militant struggles against zamindars and *deshmukhs*, against the practices of *vetti* (begar—forced labour), against illegal exactions and against evictions of cultivators from their lands.

Below are a few incidents from a narrative by one leader and participant in those struggles, that would give an idea of the mood and militancy of the peasant masses in Telangana at the beginning of the post-war period. Many such struggles carried on in Khammam, Warangal and Karimnagar districts or in other areas can be narrated by the participants but, unfortunately, we do not have, at present, any record of even the important mass struggles of these areas. But the events that are narrated here would illustrate the point.

1) In **Dharmapuram**, Jangaon taluka (Nalgonda district), zamindar Pusukuri Raghavarao sent his goondas to drive away the tribals from the lambadi tanda (hamlet of the lambadi people, a backward tribal community), who had in their possession 80 acres of dry and 25 acres of wet land. The lambadis, under the leadership of the Sangham (the Andhra Mahasabha had come to be lovingly called by the people as “Sangham”), took up sticks and slings (Catapults used to hurl stones at birds to protect the peasants’ crops), planted red flags in their fields and marching

\*Taken from “Telangana People’s Struggle And Its Lessons” written by P Sundarayya

up and down, protected their fields, drove away the goondas and tilled their lands. It was these lambadis who had cleared these waste lands and had been cultivating them for decades. The landlord who had all the power in the village in his hands could not drive away the lambadis and was defeated in his plans.

2) **In Mundari** village (Jangaon taluka), lambadis had cleared 30 acres of wet and 40 acres of dry waste lands and were cultivating them and living there. The landlord, Kadari Narasimha Rao, ousted these lambadis and got the lands registered in his name. The lambadis were determined to win back their lands. Under the leadership of the Sangham and with the help of people from the surrounding ten villages, about 3,000 people armed with sticks and slings, their only weapons, marched to those fields. The landlords, having become wise after the experience in Dharmapuram, had brought in 75 armed reserve policemen and stationed them there. The neighbouring landlords had gathered and all their goondas were collected. Kadari Narasimharao, himself riding a horse with a rifle in his hand, was present on the spot. Thus, the landlords, their goondas and the armed police faced the 3,000 people, armed with sticks and flying high their red flags. Faced with the determined mass of people, the landlords and their goondas took protection behind the armed police. Police officer Gurudayal Singh asked his police to aim their rifles at the people and warned the masses that unless they dispersed he would give orders to shoot. The people on the advice of the Sangham leaders decided that they could not face the armed police, and stepped back, though unwillingly. The police arrested 20 lambadis and Sangham leaders, put shackles on them and paraded them in all the villages, to put fright in the minds of the people and then took them to Jangaon where cases were launched against them. The zamindars thought this a victory for themselves and were gloating that they had crushed the Sangham leadership.

3) **In Errapadu** (Suryapet taluka, Nalgonda district), Janna Reddy Pratap Reddy, who had 150,000 acres of land in his name, forced many people from his villages, Chilpakunta, Edavelli, Nootankallu, to leave their lands and had falsely got their lands



registered in his name. But people under the leadership of the Sangham did not allow this goondaism. They stopped giving bribes, *nazaras* to this big landlord, stopped doing *vetti*. Angered by these acts of the people, Janna Reddy Pratapa Reddy wanted to break their morale by goondaism but dared not do so, seeing the unity of the people. He threatened them that they would be thrown out from the lands leased to them, and in village Edavelli, he tried this stunt, but the villagers, under the leadership of Gajula Ramachandrayya, a harijan, broke the agricultural implements of the zamindars and gave a good beating to his goondas, so that all of them ran for their lives. After that, in all the three villages, cases were launched against 40 villagers and they were dragged from court to court every day. In the village Errapadu, the deshmukh put up a police camp in his mansion (*gadi-fort*) and was preparing for unleashing goondaism on a large scale.

In another part of Suryapet taluka, the villagers of the Patasuryapet unitedly stood up against the injustices and evictions from their lands by the landlord, Kunduru Laxmikanta Rao, another deshmukh, who owned thousands of acres.

4) In Betavolu (Huzurnagor taluka), in 1941-44 after the eighth session of the Andhra Mahasabha held at Chilkuru, the people's struggle against the Betavolu Maktedar, Tadakamalla Seetharamachandra Rao, had reached a new high. This Betavolu struggle was exemplary in the struggles carried on all over the taluka. People in the villages, Betavolu, Jerripotulagudem, Acharyalagudem, Chennarigudem and Polonigudem under the maktedar, united under the leadership of the AMS for their demands for immediate survey settlement, extension of similar rights as existing in the ryotwari areas to their own villages, and stoppage of exploitation. This maktedar stooped to such low acts as involving the villagers in false cases, attacking those people while returning from courts, and murdering individual Sangham leaders. Venapally Rangayya narrowly escaped such an attack.

People without losing heart at these attacks stood up strongly and unitedly. They decided not to pay taxes to the maktedar till the survey settlement was done. At this, the maktedar was very much enraged and along with the local rowdies, brought in some

Arab mercenaries from Hyderabad, through one Jehangir Khan. He also called in some Sikh toughs. Lots of stories were spread about the prowess of these Arabs and Sikhs—that the Arabs use their daggers very well, the Sikhs throw their wheel from their hair at somebody whose head it cuts off instantaneously and the wheel comes back to the hands of the owner, and so on—all in an attempt to terrorise the people. He made them parade in the villages with swords in their hands, pistols and daggers in their belts and lathis in their hands. Encouraged with this outside help, the local goondas started harassing the people.

By then, the people had given up going to courts and offices to get relief and were in a mood to resort to direct action, even a non-tax movement. They also got ready for self-protection from the goonda attacks. They took their animals to the zamindar's pasture lands and tried to establish their rights on those lands and deprive the zamindar of the grazing tax. They drove the animals on to the 600 acres of pastures of his maktedar and when his goondas attacked them, they repulsed the attack. The maktedar with police help, came to the village to collect the dues and get the people's property confiscated. But the women of the village attacked them with brooms in their hands and drove them away. The maktedar's goondas or government help to them were of no avail before the united strength of the people. By 1946, the maktedar was made to eat humble pie and dared not show his face openly and was forced to move stealthily and in a shamefaced manner. Those 600 acres of land were distributed among the people and even today they are in the possession of the people (1965).

5) **In Bakkavantulagudem**, Bhogala Veera Reddy was a big landlord. He ruined many families with collection of cash interest or interest in grain and other feudal oppression. He used his financial position, police help and his mali-patel vatan position in the villages to carry on his exploitation. Nobody dared to oppose him. If the usurious rates of interest in cash or in grain were not paid, then the fertile lands, animals and manure stocks of the peasants were confiscated by him. Whoever opposed him had to face his rowdies. To face his oppression people of the

village united under the Sangham leadership. The Sangham came in as an obstruction to Veera Reddy's exploitation, and he decided to take revenge. He let loose his rowdies against Sangham leaders, Irigela Linga Reddy, Balapunuru Bapanayya and others. With his influence with the police, using them to supplement his goondas, he tried to crush the Sangham. He tried to rob the property and the harvest of the people. But the people, in groups, tried to teach the goondas a lesson. They stopped him from taking possession of their lands under the pretext of some old loans or dues. They had to carry on this struggle for 3-4 years but ultimately Bhogala Veera Reddy's oppression and exploitation was brought to an end.

6) **In Mallareddygudem**, even though it was a ryotwari village, there was no limit to the exploitation by the village officers—patels and patwaris, the village heads and chief accountants. The people of this village raised the banner of the Andhra Mahasabha and put an end to this exploitation. Enraged at this, the village officials tried forcibly to evict the people from 600 acres of *banjar* lands under the pretext that they were illegally cultivating them. The village officials also brought the charge that grain levies were not being paid and they decided to confiscate the harvest. The tehsildar, along with a police party, came and camped in the village. The people were enraged at the idea of the officials confiscating the harvest raised by their hard toil. They took out a procession and exposed the officials' cruel plans.

In that village of 4,000 population, one-third were Muslims. All were peasants and agricultural labourers. The police under the orders of the village officials, started searching the houses. When they went to Muslim houses, the women came forward and prevented them from searching it saying that they observed *purdah* and as such would not allow any one to enter. If they wanted any information, they could allow the Sangham leaders to have it, but would not allow the police to search the house. Faced with this determined opposition, the village officials and the district officers were enraged, but could not do anything. The unity of the Hindu and Muslim peasants was a nightmare to the bureaucrats and the landlords.

7) **Mellacheruvu** is a ryotwari village for namesake. With a population of 6,000, half of the land in this village was in the ownership of big landlords called *banjardars*, even though these lands were from the beginning cultivated by the peasants. The *banjardars* had all the rights; lease rights and possession rights used to depend on the mercy of these landlords. Many a time, the people had risen against these cruel *banjardars*, but every time, they were crushed down. The Andhra Mahasabha took the lead in uniting the people against landlord Chennur Veerabhadra Rao, whose father had very cruelly dealt with the peasants. The people who were the target of his cruelty took revenge and murdered him in broad daylight.

After that Veerabhadra Rao, sensing the mood of the people, came to an understanding with the peasants, giving permanent tenancy to them. This was viewed as a great victory for the people.

With this victory, other people, who had no rights whatsoever and were under the *banjardars*, were enthused. People fleeced by Akkiraju Tirumal Rao, *banjardar* of Venkatapuram, Mellacheruvu hamlet, came under the banner of the AMS. He was the father of the then district Congress leader, and later a Congress Minister, Sri A. Vasudeva Rao. He, with his riches and influence with the police, tried to harass the people by putting their animals in the poundage under some pretext or other or launching cases against them on false pretexts— that they had cut wood from his forest or had stolen ploughing implements from his fields. But even then the people's will was not broken. They became more stubborn. And seeing the struggles and victories of the people in Choutapalli and Bakkavantulagudem against Bhogala Veera Reddy, and sensing that the movement was going ahead, Tirumal Rao had to climb down. Under AMS leadership, many demands including permanent cultivating rights (*jirayati*) were gained by the people.

After this, the people of the taluka fought for tenancy rights against Anantagiri deshmukh, Fatehpuram Keshavarao, against landlords of the Velidanda, Chilukuru Villages; in Dorakunta, against jagirdar Mogalanayak. People also fought against *vetti*

and police atrocities. Just at this time they saw the victories of the people in the struggles in Suryapet and Jangaon and got very much enthused and the AMS had progressed to be the real people's organisation.

8) **Allipuram** and **Thimmapuram** were jagir villages of Anwar Pasha, in Warangal district. All the people there were tenants under him. They, under the leadership of the AMS, unitedly put forward their demands—reduction of rent rates, permanent ownership *pattas* for the lands, charging reasonable moderate prices, and no eviction. The jagirdar kept ten rowdies armed with daggers, swords, lathis in his house and tried to cow down the people by threats. AMS workers who were distributing leaflets were dragged forcibly inside the jagirdar's house and tortured. People armed with lathis stormed into the house and got them released. The jagirdar ran away from the house, brought the police and cases were launched against twenty people.

9) In **Mulakalagudem** village, zamindar Pingali Ranga Reddy who owned thousands of acres of land and was well known all over the Hyderabad state, conspired with others and forcibly took possession of dry and wet lands of Sattayya and his relatives, under the pretext of old loans not cleared. People of that village decided to win back the land under the leadership of the AMS. They also decided to retain the ripened harvest. The neighbouring villagers supported them in this plan. And the people armed with slings drove away the zamindar and his goondas far out of the borders of the village, and took possession of the harvest. Afterwards three lorryloads of reserve police were called in, who arrested the leaders and cases were launched against 40 people. But all the same the land and the grain remained with the people.

10) **Vengal Narasimha Reddy** was a landlord of **Nasikallu** village. He owned 2,000 acres of land. He tried to evict peasants from 1,000 acres of land. He started ploughing the land of Gundala Kondayya with the help of goondas. Immediately people collected, armed with lathis and slings, and drove away the goondas and the police. They made the zamindar take shelter in his house (*gadi*), drove the goondas away from the village and chased the police up to their camps and thus protected their lands.

In Jangaon taluk, repression by Visnur Ramachandra Reddy and other landlords had increased. Many false cases were launched against workers and at the same time goondas were let loose on the people. In village Kadavendi, even women goondas were gathered, who tried to obstruct the procession taken out by the people and abused them filthy. But these women goondas were chased out by the people. The zamindar brought revenue officials to collect forcibly the levy grain from the common peasants. But the people heroically resisted, and in Kadavendi village, 800 bags of grain belonging to the Visnur zamindar were shown to the revenue officials. Demanding the requisition of this grain by the Government, the people went all the way to the then Chief Secretary, Griggson, and prevailed on him. Meanwhile, people stood guard on the granaries lest the grain was shifted to some other place. The tehsildar who came for the requisition work connived with the zamindar to remove the grain but the people foiled their plans. The people pointed out all the granaries of the zamindar. About 6,000 bags of grain were ultimately requisitioned.

### **The Spark That Set A Fire**

#### **The Telangana Agrarian Revolt**

Visnur Ramachandra Reddy, the hated deshमुख of Jangaon taluka, in one of his villages, Palakurthi, forcibly tried to take possession of land belonging to a washer-woman, Ailamma, who was a staunch supporter and worker of the Sangham. He planned to seize the harvest directly from the fields. Just before this at a public meeting held in that village, he had sent his goondas to murder the Sangham leaders. But the people had foiled his plans and had beaten black and blue the goonda leader, Onamala Venkadu. On this pretext, the landlord arrested 14 of the Sangham leaders and lodged a case for attempted murder against them. Involved in this case were the leaders of the Sangham from that village, taluka and district. People were scared. Under these circumstances, Visnur Ramachandra Reddy thought that no one would obstruct him from taking possession of Ailamma's lands.

He sent 100 goondas and 100 farm servants men and women to gather the harvest. Then the Sangham leaders and 28

volunteers, staking their lives, and armed with lathis and shouting slogans attacked the goondas. Seeing these volunteers marching in formation with lathis and with fierce determination on their faces, the goondas ran for their lives. No one was left behind. The harvest was gathered and was sent to Ailamma's house. The same night police from Visnur arrived but they dared not touch the harvest grain stored in Ailamma's house. This incident roused the spirit of the people.

Next morning, 6 leaders including Bheemireddi Narasimha Reddy, Chakilam Yadagiri Rao, Nallu Pratapa Reddy, Katkur Ramachandra Reddy were arrested and taken to Visnur police station. At midnight, they were taken with shackles on their hands and feet to the *kutcheri* house, there they were beaten severely, their heads were thrust in the ovens, chilli powder was thrust in their anus, urine was poured into their mouths and many other acts of fascist brutality were committed. But in spite of all this, Ailamma's harvest and lands could not be seized. This victory over Visnur Ramachandra Reddy, the notorious desmukh, enthused and gave courage to the people of the whole Telangana. Long after this, the people used to describe this heroic struggle and sing songs about it.

### **Doddi Komarayya's Martyrdom : July 4, 1946**

With the above incident, the Visnur deshmukh was very much enraged. He took it as a big defeat, the like of which he had not experienced in his life-time. He planned to murder the leaders of Kodavendi village with the help of the police. As a part of this plan, he launched cases on tens of people, got 15 of them arrested. They were later released on bail. In those days, at the slightest notice, people used to gather before the Sangham office and discuss their programme. To put a stop to this, he thought that if he could frighten them with legal cases, he could go ahead with his murder plans. The police officers planned out everything with the zamindar and his goondas and left the village, leaving him a free hand.

It was July 4, 1946. Goondas who were drunk, pelted stones at the houses of the leaders. The people, armed with lathis and

slings and raising slogans, took out a procession. When it came near the house of the zamindar, which was on the main road, goondas who had taken shelter in a shed near the zamindar's house, fired many shots at the people. Village Sangham leader Doddi Komarayya, who was leading the procession died on the spot, hit in the stomach by a bullet. His elder brother, Doddi Mallayya, got hit in the leg and fell down. Mangali Kondayya had his forehead bruised and his brother Narasayya was hurt in the arm.

But the people did not run away in panic. They surrounded the zamindar's house, shouting "blood for blood". The goondas who were in the shed next to the zamindar's house, thought that they would not be able to save their lives from the wrath of the people and jumped into the zamindar's house, thinking that its high walls would give them protection. But the people had already surrounded it. News was sent to the surrounding villages and they came with dried grass and other fuel to set fire to the house of the zamindar. The crowd increased to nearly 2,000. Some had surrounded the *gadi* (bungalow), some were keeping watch outside the village and some were parading the village streets. People were boiling with rage.

Hearing this news, Visnur Ramachandra Reddy's son, Baburao (Jagan Mohan) came from Visnur with 200 goondas armed with swords, daggers and pistols. People who were on the look-out outside the village raised sky-piercing slogans and showering stones from slings rushed towards the goondas *en masse*. Seeing the enraged mass, the goondas thought that even firing would not stop the on-rushing people and leaving everything behind, they ran for their lives. People chased them to a distance of three miles. Many goondas were hit with stones. Many of them, while running away, took shelter in Madapuram tanda, but the people there, sensing trouble, drove them away. Anumula Ramreddy, a known goonda, was caught hold of at one place and given a thorough beating, knowing that he was one of those who had poured urine in the mouths of Comrades Bheemireddi Narashima Reddy, C. Yadagiri Rao and others. The carts in which the goondas had come were broken to pieces. There was not a single tree left in the zamindar's mango grove.



Just at this time, about 60 reserve policemen came to the village. They told the people that they would take action against the goondas and asked them to go home. And when the people dispersed, the police handed over the goondas to the zamindar safely. On top of this, six cases were launched against Sangham leaders, the charges being that they had attacked the goondas, surrounded the gadi and tried to set fire to it, and poured urine in the mouth of the goonda leader. But no goonda were arrested nor any case launched against them. But in spite of this, the people were undeterred.

After the post-mortem on the body of Doddi Komarayya, thousands of people took it in a big procession in the villages and cremated it. People from neighbouring villages also took part in this procession. All of them pledged that they would not bend down before the zamindar but would, with renewed energy, work for the Sangham. For the next 3 months, they did not allow the zamindar's men to come to the fields and do work. After this incident, people always used to sing songs in praise of this immortal hero of theirs.

Komarayya's death and martyrdom set ablaze the pent-up fury of the Telangana peasantry. People rose in all talukas in Nalgonda *en masse*. The song saluting and praising the immortal hero used to be sung at all meetings and processions which took place all over the district. People of one village armed with sticks and slings would march to the neighbouring villages and rouse them. They would jointly hold public meetings before the *gadi* (brickbuilt strong-house of the deshmukh or the landlord), hoist the red flag and declare: "Sangham is organised here. No more *vetti*, no more illegal exactions, no evictions." If the landlord or the deshmukh did not carry out these orders of the Sangham he was socially boycotted. None should work for him in the fields, no barber, no washerman, no house-maid, no domestic servant. These orders of the Sangham were carried out. It was the local leaders who marched, addressed and spared this movement.

People who came from neighbouring villages were fed in that village without any distinction of caste and religion, and with great pomp, used to be given a send-off. The villagers from this

village joined the march and proceeded to the next, while some who came from earlier villages dropped out.

These processions used to stop before the house of the zamindar and raise slogans, such as, zamindari must be abolished, landlords' oppression and police zoolum must be put an end to, levy (compulsory grain procurement), *vetti*, corruption, should be done away with, *Amarjeevi* (of immortal fame) Doddi Komarayya Zindabad. They used it strike the ground with the lathis (*gutupalu*) in their hands with a thud. This used to shake up the whole village and put fight in the hearts of the traitors to the people. Those traitors used to lock their doors the moment they heard the slogans of these "Gutupala Sangham" as they came to be called. A new special feature of these processions was that along with men, women also took part not only in their own village but in other villages also. Songs which were written on the incident of Ailamma's land struggle attracted the women a lot. For the first time, the problem of land, eviction and *vetti* and forcible grain levies which had become the problems of their life, were connected with the slogan of abolition of zamindari, and that was the main feature of this period.

In this flood of people's movement, the Government could not collect the levy grain. The officers and men who used to collect it were not even allowed to step into the village. So also *vetti* was automatically brought to an end. The deshmukhs and village officials who used to get *vetti* done had either run away from the villages, or even if they remained in the village, they could not raise their head. The movement spread within a few weeks to about 300-400 villages in Nalgonda and neighbouring Warangal (and Khammam) districts.

### **Government Resorts To Mass Arrests And Police Terror : Party's And Andhra Mahasabha's Directives To Counter It**

By the beginning of 1946, our Party's Central Committee reviewed the growing postwar upsurge of the people and decided upon a militant development of the mass struggles, both of the working class and of the peasantry. It came out for an uncompromising struggles against the British and for full independence. It demanded the unconditional withdrawal of all

cases against the Indian National Army personnel. In fact, it revised its reformist policies pursued during the war period.

The Congress leadership, which after release towards the end of the war, was also chalking out its future course of action of mobilising the growing mass discontent against the British, to wrench maximum concessions, in terms of political power from the British. They expelled Communists from the Congress organisation on the false accusation that they had helped the British war effort and sabotaged the "Quit India" movement. Large-scale detentions of our leading cadres by the Prakasam Ministry in Madras province under special emergency ordinances took place, and others were forced to go underground.

Our Party, in the course of conducting these mass struggles and developing its own independent political basis from 1942 onwards, found it an absolute necessity to develop a people's volunteer corps to defend its cadre from the attacks of various goondas inspired by the Congress as well as by the landlords. In the Andhra area, by 1945, we had a trained volunteer corps capable of effectively using the ordinary lathi, in organised squad fight.

On that experience, our Party and the Andhra Mahasabha started training people's volunteer corps in the Telangana area, especially in those areas where our cadres were facing determined attacks from deshmukhs and jagirdars' lathials (paid goondas armed with lathis, swords and country-made guns).

It was these trained volunteer corps that came in handy in defending the peasants against the landlords' goonda attacks in Nalgonda district in 1945 and 1946. It was this that brought in hundreds and thousands of peasant youth, with lathis and slings, women with chilli powder, stones and boiling water, to defend their hearth and home.

But it was also to be noted that in those struggles of 1945-1946, except towards the latter part of the year, the peasant squads were not trained to take up fire-arms. In the Telangana villages, the Arms Act was not strictly enforced. Large numbers of country-guns—muzzle-loaders—were available and were in common use. But the Party instructed the volunteer squads not

to take recourse to them, as it would transform the struggle into an entirely new stage and would have all-India repercussions. It was only when under the incessant armed police attacks, the first upsurge of the peasant masses was suppressed and our cadre were forced to scatter, and the police and their landlords agents started combing villages and fields widely, that the Party, with the sanction of the Polit Bureau, allowed our cadre to arm themselves with muzzle-loaders and seize fire-arms (sporting guns, revolvers, and rifles) and allowed them to go in for armed self-defence. It was only then some elementary training in handling small arms, and some elementary field-craft, use of explosives for mining and bomb-making and tactics to attack enemy targets, etc., were taught to a limited cadre.

As the Nizam Government resorted to mass arrests of Andhra Mahasabha and Party cadre, and hundreds of Andhra Mahasabha militants—peasants and agricultural labourers and youth—the Party gave a call to defy the summons and arrest warrants, not to get caught by the police, to resist arrests, jump bail, resist confiscation and auction of properties of wanted persons; retreat before a large police force, hover around and come back to the villages to carry on normal activities the moment the police went away. The mood and the preparedness of the masses to take up a militant form of struggle could be gauged by their readiness to avoid arrests and face the consequences. If the masses are not prepared to defy courts and warrants, fight confiscations and auctions, but want to appear before courts, come out on bail bonds and employ lawyers to defend them, when hundreds and thousands are dragged to court after court, day after day, to harass and demoralise the masses, it is meaningless to think of any higher form of struggle, or mass militant defence of authorities.

As the experience of the Telangana movement shows, the masses responded enthusiastically and carried out these instructions to the letter, on a mass scale, developing newer and newer forms of resistance, on their own initiative, to big police raids. Below are some detailed extracts about some of these resistance deeds. They show how elementary and spontaneous the mass activity and resistance were at that stage.

## **Armed Police Raids On Villages And The People's Resistance**

**In Dharmapuram** village, Jangaon taluka, the magistrate with 50 reserve policemen, raided and arrested the local leader, who was leading the struggle of the people there. People from all the surrounding villages, Kadavendi, Dharmapuram, Sitaramapuram, Devaruppula, etc., nearly 1,500 of them, gathered together. They put barriers before the police van and surrounded them. Raising slogans they demanded the release of their leader. In spite of the police threat to shoot at them, the people did not stir from that place, but stood some yards away from the police. Afterwards the magistrate and the police officers assured the crowd that they would not harm their leader in any way and also made the leader assure them in the same way and then only the crowd left that place.

But immediately after this, Section 144 was promulgated in those four villages and was followed up by day and night raids by the police to arrest some people. Amongst those arrested were Nalla Narasimhulu, Mohan Reddy, Mangali Komarayya, Lingayya, etc. Serious cases were launched against those arrested, and to force them to submit to the police and deshmukhs, the police tortured them terribly. They were beaten black and blue, chilli powder was thrust into their anus with a stick, they were spat upon and urine was poured in their mouths. But in spite of such atrocities and tortures, which went on for a week, their morale could not be broken. Their only answer was that they would not give up the Sangham, nor resign their membership and would not bow down before the landlords. So they were sent to jail. Just before this, 13 people were also arrested in Suryapet.

After this the Government could not arrest any one anywhere else. Those who were interned also came out and without getting into the hands of the police, lived amongst the people. The people realised fully by now that unless they protected their party leaders, they would have no one to look to and so they looked after them as the apple of their eye. This idea turned into a movement soon. Whenever the police went to the villagers and asked them about the whereabouts of their *nayakulu* (leaders),

the people used to reply that they only knew the lambadi nayaks (the lambadis are called nayaks and that appellation was added to their names). This was the only answer that was heard from every one, young and old or children. It became impossible for the Government to trace the party leaders through their agents, as none dared to step into the village and whosoever dared and entered, was given a good beating and driven away. After this, the Government decided to raid the villages suddenly and arrest the leaders whose whereabouts were not known.

**Balemula :** In the last week of November 1946, the police, having come to know that village Balemula in Suryapet taluka was harbouring party leaders, raided the village to arrest them. They came into the village and surrounded the house of Comrade Matta Reddy and tried to enter it. Hearing the police arriving, Comrade Matta Reddy got up from his sleep, took up his lathi in his hand, barred their entry into the house and shouted, the alarm that the police had come. Hearing his shouts, his neighbours, with sticks in their hands shouting slogan, rushed towards the house. A sub-inspector's arm was broken and many constables' heads were broken, too. Two of their rifles were broken. At this, the circle inspector fired point blank at Matta Reddy who was rushing with his *gutupa* and at others. Matta Reddy was shot in the head and stomach and shouting "Sangham ki jai", fell down dead. Three more were seriously injured. Even before the people could recover the dead body, the police put it into the van and sped off. The people tried to obstruct the speeding van but could not do so. People with grief in their hearts at the death of their leader and injuries to others, were enraged that the enemy had slipped away from their hands, so they kept close watch, armed with sticks and slings to meet the enemy's onslaught. Faced with the courage and resistance of the people, the police dared not raid any other house in that village, and other party leaders in that village were saved.

In the morning everyone came to Suryapet, took the dead body after the post-mortem, brought it back to the village in a procession with thousands of people of the neighbouring villages participating in it, and cremated it. People's anger had increased

much. The revolutionary message of the party leaders to the people after this incident, the exhortation of Matta Reddy's wife to avenge her husband's death, enthused the people very much and put a new spirit in them. They pledged at the cremation ground that they would carry on the work of the martyr and would destroy the Nizam and zamindari and police repression.

Another important leader of that area, Comrade Ananta Reddy, was killed in this raid. But I could not get details of his heroic life and exploits.

### **People's Preparations**

Patasuryapet (Suryapet taluka), Devaruppula (Jangaon taluka), Mallareddygudem (Huzurnagar taluka) were expected to be the next targets of big police raids and this news reached the people who immediately decided that these centres must be protected. The people from neighbouring villages used to come to these places and along with the local people, keep watch the whole night and go away in the morning. During day time cultivation work and other jobs of the Sangham, and at night, watch, used to be their daily programme.

One thing must be understood here—that the party cadre had no idea of military raids, their weapons, their strength and the result of these raids. Armed with lathis and slings and one's body wrapped in gunny cloth, one could face the rifle shots—this was the idea entertained by local cadres. The bullet would not penetrate but would get deflected by the sack cloth! Besides this naive belief, shout slogans and scare away the military. Each one had stick, and sling to throw stones, which was quite a strong instrument to scare away the birds but unless against the rifles of armed police. Heaps of stones were collected in the villages. In the above-mentioned villages, these preparations went on at full speed. Every man and woman in every house pledged himself or herself to fight. Every street had heaps of stones, every house had stones. Besides, chilli powder, pounding sticks, etc., were kept at hand. Day and night, on all sides of the villages, watch was kept. A big drum was put in the centre of the village at the sound of which everyone, wherever he might be, was to rush in and join the battle-field with his weapons. This drum-beating

could be heard in the neighbouring villages also. Arrangements for news-carrying were made perfect. There were couriers who would get the news of the police and relay it to other villages. The village cadre used to carry out every detailed direction of the taluka and district leaders. That was the mood, spirit, discipline and confidence that the people had then.

Another important thing was that there were no enemy agents in the villages. Either they had run away or had submitted to the will of the people. And practically all the families participated in these struggles.

### **Raid On Patasuryapet**

One night, at about 3 a.m., the military stopped their lorries outside the village and armed with rifles, bren-guns and other weapons, stealthily and soundlessly, marched in and surrounded the village and furlong away from its outskirts. On the main roads, further away from the village, another military cordon was also laid. They took all precautions so that the people should not get scent of their presence in the village till morning. People who were going about were stopped on the way and were made to sit down with the military silently. In the morning, all along the outskirts of the village, the military was seen spread out. The drum was beaten for a long time, "*Sangham ki jai*" slogans rent the air. Slings were used in all directions; their stones hit the iron helmets of the military with a thud and then the military went back a little out of reach of the slings. People were very much enthused to see this and pushing forward, pelted more stones amidst the din of slogans. This went for quite some time. By this time, the people had come out of their village. A special feature of this fight was that women were by the side of the menfolk, handing over stones for their slings.

The military officer, Collector and the local landlords' men announced many a time that if the people put down their weapons and handed over their leaders, no harm would come to the people. But the people were in no mood to listen and went on attacking. All this time, the news of the military raid spread like lightning to the neighbouring villages and people whatever they were took up all the weapons at hand and in groups came running and



rushing onwards. The military stopped all the people coming from all directions far away, and prevented them from approaching the village.

Along with the military, there were patels, patwaris, and landlords' men who again and again tried to specify the people as well as threaten them, that if they did not put down their weapons then the military would use their rifles and bren-guns, which could shoot at a large even a mile off and all of them would die. But the people were not frightened. They said that the Government and landlords' men had ruined them completely and no one would trust them any more. As long as they had their slings in their hands, the bullets would not do them any harm. The talks went on quite a long time with no effect, the people standing fast, shouting slogans.

People coming from neighbouring villages swelled the gathering to thousands. But the military did not allow them to approach the village. Each group was separated from the other on the main roads. People formed a ring on the farther side of the military. Those who had started from 15-20 miles were still on their way. There was no food for the people and the military. Seeing that the people would not give in, the military on the orders of the officers, moved towards the village people and on the mass on the far side.

When the people saw the military moving, they again showered stones and fired their country rifles. The military also fired. Comrades Narasayya of Patasuryapet and Bhikshmayya of Patarlapadu died and three others were injured. People, when they saw the rifle shooting and the sound they made, the instantaneous death and injuries to others, realised that their slings would have no effect on the military with its modern weapons, and they scattered. Many men and women in the village were arrested and tortured horribly. Many outside villagers who had come in the night to help these villagers were also amongst those arrested. A large number of people were arrested and kept in jails. There were men and women, old and young people among those arrested.

On the same day, Balemula was again raided by hundreds of military personnel. After a short fight, nearly 200 were arrested and sent to a different jails.

## **Raids On Devaruppula**

The military in big strength surrounded the village Devaruppula in the early morning at 4 a.m. Like in Patasuryapet, they did not allow the outside people to come in and the resistance of the peoples was repeated as in Patasuryapet. Seeing that every one including men and women, old and young were in the fight and some military people were getting injured by the stones, on the orders of the officer, the military rushed towards the people and fired at them. Mandadi Samireddi (Kadavendi) and another (from Sitaramapuram) died instantaneously. Many were injured and the people got scattered. The military got hold of whomsoever they could lay their hands on and tortured them horribly. Four hundred people were arrested and sent to the various jails.

Next day, many people even from far-off places came to this village after the raids. With their help those villagers who had escaped arrest took out a procession and held a meeting. After the meeting people who had come from outside, wanted to attack the military camp at Mundrai. Leaders explained to them how futile such an attempt would be when the military was fully armed with modern weapons and the people had no weapons at all. But without listening to their leaders, people from Padisala, Kandur, Tatipamula villages, about a thousand of them, marched towards Mundrai, shouting slogans. But the military chased them away.

**Mallareddygudem:** This village on the banks of the Krishna in Huzurnagar taluka was the centre for party activities. This area of fertile black soil, though producing commercial crops, had no transport routes and under the patel and patwari oppression, the people there were very backward in all respects. With the AMS agitation, their exploitation was stopped and people were enthused. At the time, Jangaon taluka struggles were at their peak. People were learning lesson from those struggles. They had learnt from the landlords' goonda attacks, Nizam's army raids and Komarayya's murder that they must protect their leadership. People of Mallareddygudem learnt self-defence. Men and women got physically and mentally prepared to fight the goondas if they attacked individually or in groups. This village had rocky soil. It had houses built with stones and mud. In self-

defence, people had collected heaps of stones on the upper storey of their houses. Every one decided to keep ready small and big sticks, pots full of chilli powder, etc. The people who were once helpless before landlords' goondas and the police now united together in strength and prepared themselves for self-defence. On December 29, 1946, ten to twelve lorries of military arrived in Huzurnagar.

Directions were sent to the people that when military raid the villages, the people should avoid collision with them and slip away. But the local leaders had not informed the people about these directions and so there was no change in the people's tactics of fighting. They were keeping watch at night and in the early morning when they saw the military approaching the village, attack signals were given and people instead of going to their normal work, got ready for an attack. Some were to be on the entrance roads, some in bylanes, some on the upper storeys of the houses and some were to carry news out and bring in the news. Thus each one was busy with his own work. The whole village was astir. It was surrounded by *jowar* (millet) fields and it was so thickly grown that it was impossible to see the movements or the strength of the military from the village. Large numbers of military and armed persons had taken their positions around the village, shielded by the *jowar* fields. Both sides were quite alert.

The village leadership had gone out of the village for the night as a precautionary measure. Recognising the signals, they wanted to return but seeing the military spread all around the village, they did not come in. There was no link between the leadership and the people who did not wait for their leaders but got ready for self-protection. Day was breaking. Resistance forces saw the movements of the military. From all sides, they pelted stones on the military, simultaneously. The stones hit the helmets of the military. They retreated a little distance. The resistance forces moved forward and taking cover behind the stone walls, again pelted stones at the military. Volunteers who were tired, were replaced by others. Old people and children, and women were supplying stones and slings to their menfolk. Outside the village,

the collector and military officers were addressing the people through mikes, which was not heard in the battle din and the people were not in a mood to listen also. They were also inspired with the resistance. Buttermilk was supplied to all. Each one in turn was resting and again going into action.

Day was advancing but there was no end to the fight. They appealed to the people to stop the fight for a while and send three or four of their elders to talk and listen to what the officers had to say. If they did not agree, they could go back. All the others should be where there were. At this a discussion arose as to why the talks should not be held. They appointed the sole leader of this fight, Errabolu Appireddi, to go as their representative. He had to go a hundred yards further and talk to the officers. The fight was to be stopped on the north side, but on all other sides, it was to continue. It was ten o'clock. Four persons along with Appireddi started out. Hardly had they gone 50 yards when the military shot at them point blank. Comrade Appireddi fell on the spot. Another person who was sitting on the verandah of the house opposite got hit in the stomach and died. Just at this time, the military also fired at the volunteers who were fighting on the south side of the village. One woman who was handing over stones to her husband got shot and died. Many more were injured. This incident of Appireddi and three others dying of bullet wounds and many more getting injured, came so unexpectedly that the people got nervous.

The military moved in groups and committed atrocities. Those who were caught were beaten up, with ropes and taken along. From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. they had a free hand and then carried the men and women in their lorries. But before putting them in the lorries, they separated the Muslims amongst the people and left them behind, even though they were leading the fight. This surprised the Muslims and they also wanted to get into the lorries along with their other brethren, but no heed was paid to them. The military put nearly 400 non-Muslims in the lorries and drove away. The whole village was in a devastated state. There was no one to give courage to the remaining people. The Muslims who were left behind were trying to console the bereaved families,

when the anti-people elements in the village spread the rumour that this was the doing of the Muslims and the military was still in their houses. This gave rise to doubts in the minds of the innocent people and thinking that it might be true, they sent word to the leaders who were outside the village, not to enter just at that time, but await further news. The people's upsurge was temporarily disrupted, the cadre was scattered under severe repression.

### **Aftermath Of The Raids**

The military raids did not stop there. The whole district was handed over to the military. Many military camps were established in many villages. The raids went on for days and nights and people were harassed. Pressure was brought on people to trace out the village Sangham committee members, volunteers corps leaders and other chief leaders of the Sangham. The people used to be rounded up and taken along with the military for searching the fields, wells, fences, shrubs and all other possible places. At the same time, the people were asked to pay the grain levy, and give in writing that they would hand over their leaders and resign from the Sangham. The Nizam's son Mukkaram Jah visited many taluka centres and donated clothes to many people. A big boosting propaganda was carried on that the king was like father to the people, and thus this visit of the Nizam's son was used as tactics to drive a wedge between the Sangham and the people. Military raids went for weeks and months. People stood these hardships without losing courage. During the night the men used to live scattered all over the fields, outside the village. Women in groups of 15 and 20 used to sleep together so as to be able to protect their honour.

Patels, patwaris and deshmukhs who had left the villages and gone to the towns, returned taking advantage of these raids. Before they were subdued under the people's revolt but now they raised their head and started pointing out the leaders from amongst them to the military and getting them harassed.

Some elders in the villages started discouraging the people saying that they would not be able to face the military, and advised them to come to terms with them. And because it was dinned

into their ears day and night that if they resigned from the Sangham, the military raids would stop and no harm would come to any one of them, some agreed to resign, even though they had all love for their Sangham. But after these resignations, the military took the people along with them everywhere in search of the leaders of the Sangham and the Communist Party.

In Suryapet taluka, Kandagatla, Aruvapalli, Urlugonda, Ragipadu and Kotapadu hillocks were searched by bringing thousands of people from the surrounding 5-6 villages and forcing them to do this job with the military standing by. Grain levy was procured by compulsion from the villagers. Even the land revenue was forcibly collected before the scheduled time. A sort of paralysis, sullen submission, spread over the people's movement. But even then, their love for the Sangham and leaders, and the urge to protect them, was never vanquished. They used to protect the leaders, feed them, but would ask them to go away for a while to some other area, as they would come to harm if they were seen by the traitors in the village, and placed their helplessness, in the face of the terrific police repression.

The village traitors getting emboldened started taking the villagers along with them to look for the leaders all over the place, even without the help of the military. The people who were forced to do this dirty job under terror, used to protect their leaders even in these searches, by not reporting even if they were seen or by sending word ahead to them of such searches. This zeal of the people obtained the release of the Epuru village leader when he was arrested and was being taken to the nearest camp at Bopparam.

However, quite a number of local and village leaders were arrested and the remaining could not be given protection. The leader of Patasuryapet was arrested on the Kandagatla hillock. Those arrested used to be tortured horribly by the military, the village officers and landlords and their goonda gangs. In Jangaon taluka, Narmeta village, one village leader was arrested and badly beaten up. In the same area, another worker was beaten till he lost consciousness. Devarupputla village was completely looted by goondas of the Visnur landlord. Revenge was taken on

villagers in many ways. Later on, these anti-people elements by themselves started searching for the leaders even without any other help. These conditions prevailed till May 1947, when the people found it necessary to control the activities of the traitors, the goondas and other anti-people elements, who were emboldened by the military camps in the villages.

In Patasuryapet village in Suryapet taluka, where one leader was arrested on the Kandagatla hillock, the police, patel and landlord were given a good beating and their arms and legs were broken. Similarly, the Chandupatla landlord, big traitor, along with his goondas who had become notorious in Kothagudem, were dragged out of the cart in which they were travelling and were given a good beating. People also beat up the goondas of Jannareddy Pratap Reddy of Chilpakunta, goondas of Thimmapuram, the landlords of Kothagudem and Ravipadu. In Kadavendi village (Jangaon taluka), the Visnur deshmukh's goondas, when they were trying to loot the houses, were resisted by people armed with knives, lathis and other weapons and were not allowed to raise their head. In Seetarampuram, a person who was the police patel, and who had three policemen to protect his house, was terrorising the people. He lost his life at the hands of the people. The protecting police left everything behind and ran away. In Ramannapet taluka, the Pallerla deshmukh, a hated oppressor, was killed by the people. In Nalgonda taluka, Addagudur village, three C. I. D. men who had come disguised, were beaten up and let off with a warning that if they or any of their lot dared to enter the village, they would not leave the place alive.

In Huzurnagar taluka, there was no limit to the terrorisation practised by the anti-people elements in these areas. Landlords of Velidanda, Dorakunta, Bakkamantulagudem, Fathepuram villages vied with each other in these acts. Bhogala Veerareddy who was the landlord of Bakkamantulagudem in Choutapalli area and his brother Pichireddy actually participated in the searches in the forests for the Sangham leaders and also insulted the wife of the village leader Saidireddy. The landlords had their own fire-arms. But even then, people decided to go to their houses

with lathis, knives and beat them to death and teach them a lesson. The people surrounded the house of the landlord and entered the house of the goonda leader Bhogala Veerareddy. He tried to resist with his rifle, but his rifle was broken by lathi blows. The landlord's hands and legs were broken. When his brother, Pichireddy came with a lathi and fell on the volunteers who were keeping guard, they beat back the attack and in the fight he got a blow on the head and died on the spot.

By the morning, this news had spread all over the taluka. All the landlords and their goondas took all their valuables with them and ran away to taluka centres. Reports of the Chilukuri Deshmukh, Jupudi Narasimha Rao, being waylaid and thrashed, while returning from the police station, harijan agricultural labourers' resistance to the jagirdar of Dorakunta and destruction of his property by them, had rekindled a new spirit and brought in a favourable atmosphere for the Sangham in the taluka.

An important change took place in the conditions in the whole of Nalgonda district due to these actions against the traitors and the landlords, goondas and other anti-people elements. The local people started writing posters and leaflets, warning the village anti-social elements, and pasting them on the walls and doors of house of these elements in particular. In some places the farm servants who worked in the houses, used to leave these leaflets on the tables, cots, etc., in the landlords' houses. In many places, these landlords were given a beating by people in disguise. But while doing all this, each one was carrying on his daily work without giving any inkling to the enemy about their role in these acts.

Leaflets threatening the police used to be thrown into the police camps also. These leaflets used to strike terror into the hearts of the enemy. Due to this, in many places the enemy left and shifted to the towns. They would not move about without protection. Some anti-social elements gave up their goondaism and begging the people, stayed on in the village itself. The search for Sangham leaders stopped. People got the feeling that the Sangham was back amongst them.



### **Some Lessons About This Phase Of The Movement**

One patent fact that emerges from the events of 1945 and 1946 is that our Party had not understood the depth of the revolutionary upsurge of the masses in the immediate post-war situation. Its reformist understanding and functioning during the war period made it difficult for it to foresee these developments and prepare itself and the people's organisation for them.

It is true that it was only our Party that came out with the slogan of "people's raj in Vishalandhra", advocated dissolution of Hyderabad state and merging it in its neighbouring linguistic area. It traced out a vision of what people's raj in Vishalandhra, in an independent India, would be like, in various sectors. It came out with an anti-feudal, democratic agrarian programme in the Andhra State Committee election pamphlet, *Prajarajyam in Vishalandhra*. This was sold in large numbers, 20,000 copies at that time. But all this was envisaged as a slow process.

Even when our Party took to developing militant mass struggles during the second half of 1946, organised seizure of waste lands and lands under zamindari and feudal landlords' illegal possession in the Andhra area, it withdrew them, faced with the Congress Ministry's repression.

The Party in the Madras province including the Andhra area was virtually under ban. A large number of leaders were under detention or underground during the first few months of 1947, under the Prakasam ordinance. But on the eve of the transfer of power on August 15, 1947, all of them were released or came out. The line of conducting militant mass struggles went into the background and the Party was involved in a controversy whether to extend all-out support to the Nehru government of national independence, in the name of defeating the British imperialist conspiracies and the narrow Vallabhbhai clique, who were out to undermine the newly won independence.

With the advent of independence, whatever militant movements were there in erstwhile British India, slowed down—mostly because the people were expecting big steps from the Congress Government headed by Nehru which obtained independence, and that it would be able to solve their problems as well, and partly

because of the inability of our Party to give proper lead to the masses, being weak and isolated from the rest of the democratic parties and groups.

It was only in the Hyderabad and Travancore states, which refused to join the Indian Union that the people's discontent and struggles were further developed, to a certain extent encouraged and supported by the Indian National Congress and Indian Government. In many of the other states, which Vallabhbhai Patel brought into the Indian union, assuring them big privy purses and safeguarding their privileges, the states people's movements were also toned down and withdrawn. It was Vayalar and Punnappa under the leadership of our Party against the Travancore Maharaja and his Dewan, C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, it was the Telangana struggle in Hyderabad state, again led by our Party, that gave vent to the post-war discontent, and orientation to an agrarian revolt.

If we had had a correct revolutionary grasp of the things that were shaping up and had developed our Party on correct Marxist-Leninist principles, taking Telangana itself, we should have trained our cadre and the people for launching vigorous attacks on the whole feudal system, seized the illegally begotten land from the landlords as well as the surplus land from them, as we had to do later groping hesitantly, step by step. We would have trained our cadre and militants not only with lathi defence but even for armed defence. We would not have hesitated for such a long time in allowing our cadre to seize and use even the country guns, which resulted in total dislocation and disruption of the first upsurge.

But in spite of our hesitation, the Telangana people's discontent and upsurge was so deep and great that by their spontaneous activity, of course guided by our Party, with all its limitations, they—

1) Put an end to *vetti* (forced labour), illegal exactions, and compulsory grain levies and started to reoccupy the lands seized earlier by the landlords and deshmukhs. The movements became one for abolishing feudal landlordism and even Nizam rule. The mass character and sweep of this movement were evident from the fact that it spread within few weeks to hundreds of villages.

2) People who started resisting the landlords' armed goonda attacks and beat them back, got ready to face later the armed police, and then even the military forces of the Nizam.

3) People of one village rushing to the help of neighbouring villages under police attack.

4) The women joining their menfolk, in the actual resistance, in every manner possible.

5) The Sangham became their guide and leader and helped to solve all their problems, including the disputes between husbands and wives; and a mass militant cultural upsurge of militant songs, folk arts, took place.

It was this depth of the mass discontent and upsurge that in the special and peculiar favourable conditions in Hyderabad state, that again in August 1947, when the Nizam refused to join the Indian union, it surged forward even after the bitter blows it had received earlier.

It was to the credit of our Party, to our Andhra units, that it guided the Telangana anti-feudal anti-Nizam struggle from 1940 to 1946 and converted the Andhra Mahasabha into a united mass organisation and front of all anti-Nizam people's forces. It won the confidence of the people, became the leader of this front and organisation; it popularised the struggle of the Telangana people, the idea of Vishalandhra, mobilised wide-scale support to the fighting Telangana peasantry. It provided shelter and help to the cadre and people under the Nizam's attack, in the coastal areas. It made the coastal districts the rear of this Telangana people's movements. For this, the Party was under attack from the Congress Government even during the first half of 1947. Later after the short period of legality following independence, it was once again banned and attacked on January 30, 1948. All this period the Party helped to regroup the scattered movement in Telangana and was able to reorientate it on proper lines—first in joining with the State Congress leaders in the struggle for merging the state in the Indian Union and giving it a mass character, then developing it into the anti-feudal and anti-Nizam agrarian revolt and later into the liberation struggle against Nizam's rule. It shook the very foundations of Nizam's rule

itself. As the anti-feudal agrarian waves of revolt went spreading the big bourgeois-led bourgeois-landlord Government of independent India, under the leadership of the Congress and Nehru, rushed their armed forces, to suppress the Telangana agrarian revolt, stop it from spreading further and buttress their own class rule in Hyderabad state as well as in the rest of India!

About these aspects, we will try to trace the developments in the succeeding chapters.

## **Armed Resistance Movement Against Nizam And Razakars\***

*Distribution of Land, Establishment of People's Rule—15th August 1947 to 13th September 1948*

The Party and the Andhra Mahasabha was busy during the first four months of 1947, regrouping the scattered Part and AMS organisation, under the heavy blows of Nizam's repression. The Party was also under ban and attack in the Andhra area. Yet, Guntur, Krishna and Godavari had been the protective base for the Telangana fighters.

On August 15, 1947, power was transferred from British imperialism to the bourgeois-landlord Congress. The Nizam declared that he would not join the Indian Union but would remain independent (Azad Hyderabad). The Indian National Congress was forced to launch a satyagraha struggle in Hyderabad state to bring pressure on the Nizam Nawab to accede to the Indian Union

This gave us a very good opportunity and new possibilities of developing the Telangana people's struggles. We joined hands with the State Congress in its struggle for the merger of the state with the Indian Union. Since our Party and Andhra Mahasabha were the major political force, with great political and mass influence and organisation, especially because of the struggle of 1944-46, we had a decisive voice in this movement.'

The people, all sections, in the Andhra areas, gave massive support to this state people's movement. We could collect in two or three days in just the one town of Vijayawada Rs. 20,000 for providing arms for fighting the Razakars and the Nizam.

Joint meetings and demonstrations were held with the national and red flags fluttering together. Whatever programme the Congress chalked out, we made it a huge mass affair, drawing thousands of people to participate in them. If the Congress called

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\* Taken from "Telangana People's Struggle and Its Lessons" written by P. Sundarayya

for a demonstration or picketing by a limited number of satyagrahis, we used to make it a huge mass demonstration or mass picketing.

When the Congress gave the call for boycotting colleges and schools and courts, we again made it a mass affair. We recruited a large number of students into our volunteer squads and the Andhra Mahasabha organisation. It was this influx of students that helped the movement grow by leaps and bounds; many of them, later on, developed themselves as local and area leaders of both the mass organisation and of the guerrilla organisation.

The Congress gave the slogan of breaking the customs barriers between the Indian Union and Nizam's territory, resignation of patels and patwaris. Our Party and the Andhra Mahasabha converted it into destroying all the records of these posts.

The Congress gave a call for cutting toddy-yielding sheaths of palm and date trees and called for boycott of toddy shops to deprive the Nizam state of one of its main sources of revenue, as also because of its own fad of prohibition. We converted it for days into large-scale destruction of date and palmyra trees and also physically preventing the toddy-tappers from making toddy. But soon we realised that the toddy-tappers, a large percentage of the rural poor, were losing by this programme their occupation and livelihood and were turning hostile. The Party corrected this error, changed its slogan and gave a call, "Tap the toddy, give it clean and cheap to the people. But do not pay taxes." This went to the hearts of the people. Let me add, here itself, that the party banned drinking toddy by our guerrilla squad members and political organisers of even village level. This was strictly observed.

The Congress gave the slogan of merger of the state with the Indian Union. We advocated at the same time dissolution of the state, merging its linguistic components into the respective linguistic areas and the formation of united linguistic states in an Indian people's state, and the abolition of Nizam rule.

The whole national sentiment was in favour of this movement. The bourgeois-landlord Government of independent India, headed by the big bourgeoisie, also wanted Hyderabad's merger. All the

democratic forces of the whole of India were in favour, because they wanted that the stooge and supporter of British imperialism, the Nizam Nawab, should be thrown out; the whole Hindu population wanted the Muslim feudal Nawab's rule to go; the three linguistic nationalities wanted liberation because of their desire to merge with their own linguistic areas, and develop their language and culture; the growing bourgeoisie, the capitalist landlord and the rich peasantry also wanted Nizam's autocracy and its feudal set-up to go and be replaced by a "democratic and responsible Government, as part of India" for their own economic and political development; the toiling peasant, the rural poor wanted the wholesale abolition of feudal landlord exploitation, of *vetti* (begar), of forced labour, illegal exactions, of forced grain levy and wanted land for cultivation. The workers wanted employment and better wages. All currents joined in this all-in anti-Nizam struggle, for a democratic regime, as a component of the Indian Union. A progressive section of the Muslims also joined the movement.

### **Our Agrarian Programme**

Our party and the Andhra Mahasabha did not confine itself to transforming the items of the Congress programme into action, into one of large-scale mass participation. We actively turned it into a definite anti-feudal agrarian revolt.

—We led the people to stop all kinds of forced labour and illegal exactions.

—To refuse to deliver the forced grain levies.

—We led the people not only to retain the lands they were cultivating on lease from the landlords, but also to recover all the lands illegally seized by the landlords. Reduction in rent and later total non-payment of rents to the bigger landlords and to the enemies of the people, was also enforced.

—Occupation and cultivation of waste lands of the Government and of the big landlords.

—We started seizing the grain stocks of the hated landlords, and started distributing it to the needy rural poor.

—Along with the records of patels and patwaris, we burnt the records of the landlords, the records of moneylenders, and all promissory notes and bonds executed in their favour.

—And, finally, within a few months, the seizure of the surplus lands of the landlords and their distribution to the poor peasantry, along with draught cattle and agricultural implements. The ceilings started with 500 acres, then by stages were reduced to 100 acres dry and 10 acres wet as the movement developed, and as the urgency to meet the poor peasant demand for land grew and as experience got enriched.

The movement became a wide-spread people's movement. The same enthusiasm, as in the days of Devaruppula, Patasuryapet, Balemula and Mallareddigudem was witnessed. But the sweep was deeper and statewide. People started feeling that once again "Guttapalu Sangham" (i.e., lathi sangham) was on the march, but this time it was not only lathis, but whatever fire-arms that could be obtained; people were arming themselves, all groups, the Congress, the Communist and Andhra Mahasabha squads.

The Nizam's rule was shaking to its foundations. He had resorted to large-scale terror. He organised the Razakars under the leadership of Kasim Razvi, of the Majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen. He let them loose, with full army backing, on the villagers; looting, arson, torture, murder and rape stalked the land. The people had to defend and fight back, with whatever weapons they could lay hands on, with whatever organisation they could muster.

Under this heavy terror, a large number of persons, especially from the rich top sections, left for the Union territory for protection. Congress Satyagraha camps and squads also left the area and migrated to the Indian Union territory and established their armed camps on the borders, and from there they started counter-raids. It was only the Communist and Andhra Mahasabha squads that could continue to function inside the state and fight back the Razakar and Nizam terror.

The cooperation that had existed in the initial stages of the merger movement between the Congress and the Andhra



Mahasabha cadre evaporated within a few weeks. The sweep of the anti-feudal and anti-landlord movement and the mass character of the anti-Nizam movement that was taking shape, cooled the ardour of the Congress leadership. Further, with their having no stomach for such a radical programme, with no roots among the toiling people, their squads degenerated into raiding and launching attacks against the people, and in support of the exploiting landlords.

Our squads had to act and disarm many of these Congress squads. Quite a large number of militant and honest members of these Congress squads joined us later and fought together with us

It is a matter of historical record that the Indian Government concluded a stand-still agreement with the Nizam, went on supplying the Nizam's forces with arms and ammunition, while the Nizam Government and its police and army personnel went on with their marauding raids on the people and on the freedom fighters in the state. Once when the Nizam police raided and seized the wounded fighters on their way from the Munagala enclave to Vijayawada, the Government of India for long did not take steps to get them released or prevent such actions being repeated.

The anti-Razakar, anti-Nizam armed struggle developed in the Telangana area rapidly; village squads with about 10,000 members and regular guerrilla squads with more than 2,000 members were formed; innumerable struggles, heroic deeds, nearly 2,000 militants, fighters and leaders laying down their lives but taking a heavy toll of the Nizam's armed personnel, police agents, Razakars, landlords and their goondas; driving them away from village; 3,000 villages administered by village panch committees or gram rajyams; land distribution, education and health, and all rural services organised by these fighting people's committees.

Let the chronicler, here, describe this heroic saga of the Telangana people's struggle, of the Telangana heroes and the Telangana martyrs.

## **The Chronicler's Story**

### **The New Upsurge**

Thousands of people from 10 to 15 villages coming together and marching to other villages with their lathis, hoisting national and red flags, breaking open the grain stocks of the landlords and distributing it to the people, became the common programme. In Miryalagudem taluka, the Tadakamalla landlord's paddy stocks were surrounded by 3,000 people, taken charge of and 400 bags of paddy were distributed amongst the people.

In Huzurnagar, Suryapet villagers, about 3,000 in number took out a victory march to Anantaram, via Annaram, Poltapadu. After their usual programme, they broke open the stores of the landlord and distributed the grains. In short, the lathi sangham was named as the "Victory March Sangham" (*Jaitra yatra Sangham*)

### **Razakar Formation And Raids**

The Razakar army was formed under the leadership of Kasim Razvi, the leader of the majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen, with the slogans that "Azad Hyderabad" was a Muslim empire; in the Asafjahi reign every Muslim was a ruler; to protect this Government was God's command, and so to get into the Razakar army and oppose the Hindus was every Muslim's sacred duty.

Razakars who had their centres in cities and towns used to raid the villages, loot the people, pull down the national and red flags. They had spears, jambias, swords, muzzle-loaders and rifles with them whenever they made these raids. One thing must be noted here that just as in the earlier period, the people both Hindus and Muslims, had fought in the villages against landlords unitedly, so also they fought shoulder to shoulder against the Razakars, without falling prey to religious fanaticism.

### **Struggles In Tungathurthi, Aleru, Nomula And Paradala**

The people who had fought against the zamindars and Government but who were suppressed earlier, came out in the resistance movement against the Razakars, once again with great enthusiasm, even though they had no weapons except lathis and spears.

The report that about 50 Razakars from Suryapet had come to Ekkaram village, reached Balemula, Kandagatla, Thimmapuram,

Patasuryapet and other villages. People from these villages, about 3,000 and more, shouting slogans and armed with slings, rushed to Ekkaram, and faced the Razakars and tried to snatch away their arms. The Razakars, giving up their plan of looting the village, had to run away in spite of their modern weapons, to save their lives.

Revenue officials, along with Razakars, went to Kontapalli and Pinavoora villages to collect land revenue. People surrounded them and killed them.

In the village of Pamulapadu, Miryalagudem taluka, the people drove the landlord Lakshma Reddy out of the village. When he tried to re-enter it, with police help, the people fought back with lathis and spears in hand. The police could not enter the village for three days till reinforcements came.

These incidents showed the high pitch of people's hatred against Nizam's officials and landlords and their mood to resist and fight back.

The Tungathurthi police station, in Suryapet taluka, was surrounded by people from Ganugabanda, Vempati and other villages. People raised slogans and pelted stones with slings and rushed at the police. The police fired round after round. In this attack, Comrade Mallipaka Mysayya of Karivirala village, who was leading and giving slogans, fell down dead and two more were injured. People retreated, taking away with them, the dead and the wounded.

In Kolanupaka (Bhongir taluka), the jagirdar had put up a big Razakar camp, and was looting the people, when on November 28, 1947, about 6,000 people gathered to raid this camp. But they gave up the plan when they found that the jagirdar was on the alert with more men and arms. They marched to other villages in groups, hoisting flags. Three thousand went to Aleru under the leadership of Asireddi Narasimha Reddi on November 29, 1947, at 6 a.m., and hoisted flags in many places and began marching in procession. The armed police barred their way with rifles. The people surged forward, the police showered bullets on them. Comrade Asireddi Narasimha Reddi, who was leading the procession, was hit in the thigh and two other people died on

the spot, 80 were injured out of whom three died in the Bhongir hospital. Fourteen had their bones broken. There were pools of blood in the whole area. The names of the dead are : Pusloji Veerayya, Chinnam Komarayya, Marpu Pullayya and Birru Narayana of Gundlagudem village, Elagandula Laxminarasayya of Tunagathurthi village.

Twenty Razakars and armed police from Nakrekallu camp raided Nomula village in Nalgonda taluka. About 400 people of Nomula and Kodaparti villages went after them with lathis and slings and chased them with battle-cries of "Communist Party ki jai", and "Sangham ki jai". The Razakars and police fired at the people frantically. Kathari Somayya, Matsa Veeramallu (both 50 years of age), Venkayya and Veerayya (two youths) lost their lives. Many were injured. Of these, two more died. Pannala papayya, who had his intestines cut open, tied up his upper cloth in to his stomach and courageously stood up. After this firing, the people retreated, carrying the dead and the wounded.

Razakars and police from the Katanguru camp who raided pardala village were chased far from the village by 300 people armed with lathis and slings. But the police took cover and fired at the people. Four died on the spot.

The police camp in Ravulapenta in Miryalagudem taluka was the centre for raids an the nearby villages. The enraged people from the villages wanted to destroy the camp and hoist the red flag. They gathered together in thousands, surrounded the camp village, but the unarmed people became the targets of police firing and were forced to scatter.

### **Collection of Arms, Formation of Regular Guerrilla Squads for Armed Resistance**

The people took the initiative. Youths in villages formed themselves into village squads. They collected arms from wherever they could. People themselves brought in their country rifles, spears, knives, etc., and everything they used in hunting. Patels and patwaris who had come to some agreement with the villagers were persuaded to hand over their arms. Where they refused to give in, the people used to enter the houses and search all over for the arms and take them away forcibly. If in some

houses they did not find the hidden arms, then a day-and-night watch would be kept on the house and the movements of the inmates to prevent hidden arms from being sent out of the villages. When the village officers tried to recover the weapons from the local people to hand them over to the Government, the people used to foil their plans. For example in Jangaon taluka, the Keshavapuram patel collected about 10 muzzle-loaders to hand them over to the Government. The youths of Cheetakoduru got scent of this and rushed in and seized the muzzle-loaders. This way, with the people's initiative, every village acquired about 5-10 muzzle loaders.

Besides these muzzle-loaders, they got hold of 12 bore-guns (*totedar tupaki*) shikari rifles, etc , from the deshmukhs. These arms were captured by raiding the houses when the enemy was alone or careless. In this, many Party members who were related to the Deshmukhs or working in their houses as farm or domestic servants, helped a great deal. Through these people, the news of the Deshmukhs' activities were easily known and getting hold of arms became easier. The Deshmukhs' houses were raided for arms when they were in no position to resist.

Muzzle-loaders, shot-guns, rifles of all varieties were seized by the people and local squads, to arm the village as well as the regular squads. Ingenious methods were used by the people in these efforts. Weapons were seized from Seenapalli Deshmukh of Jangaon taluka, from Kondapuram Deshmukh of Huzurnagar taluka, from Sommeru Narasimha Rao and from landlords of kasarlapadu, Suryapet taluka, from Chintakunta Raghava Reddy, from an army jawan in Kunur, Koram Pratap Reddy of Kondlapalli and Pagali Mallareddy of Rajaram village, from Jannareddi landlords of Kummurikuntla (all in Warangal taluka).

Similarly police and customs outposts, railway protection police forces were raided, and arms were seized. To mention only a few, Kolanupalli (Bhongir taluka); Outhapuram and Rebarti and Pembarti of Jangaon taluka; Motamarri (Madhira taluka); Madhavagudem (Huzurnagar); Husnabad (Huzurabad, Karimnagar district); Dubbaka and Khanapuram (Siddipet taluka) and many more camps.

To give an example of the ingenuity of the people and of local squads, in planning and raiding enemy posts to seize weapons, the example of the attack on the Vangapalli railway police is enough.

### **Raid on Vangapalli Station**

In Vangapalli railway station, two policemen were kept on guard duty. They had .303 rifles. One day, at four in the evening, four comrades dressed as brahmin priests entered the station master's room and saying that they wanted to go to Yadagiri Gutta to the Narasimhaswamy temple, asked for railway tickets. One policeman was sitting in the room, with his rifle leaning against the wall. The other policeman was not in the station. One comrade engaged the station master, asking him about the fare, etc., while two of them caught hold of the policeman. The fourth seized the rifle and all of them, threatening the policeman and station master, successfully made their way out. Next morning, the police went to the Yadagiri Gutta Temple and beat up the brahmin priests there saying that they had snatched away the rifle of the police.

At this same time, people from the villages were forming village squads and were resisting the Razakars and the police, who used to raid the villages. They were ready to protect their houses, property and honour. They had stopped giving levy, land tax and *abkari* (excise) duty. The grain procured under levy and the grains of landlords and anti-people elements were being distributed to the people. They were taking various actions against traitors who were harassing the people and giving information to the Razakars. They used to warn traitors and when they did not desist, they caught hold of them and forced to brush their noses on the ground openly before the people and apologise to them. In Jangaon taluka, Vadlakondu village, the people caught hold of one such element, by name Linga Reddy, who had been harassing the people very much, and cut off his nose. Persons who got some villagers murdered were done to death by these people's squads. The Sangham and the Party discouraged and later prohibited such primitive forms of torture and wild revenge.

## **Formation of Guerrilla Squads**

Razakars and armed police used to raid the villages daily, loot the houses, insult and rape women, burn houses, kill people and forcibly collect levy and excise duty. People started resisting them. The Party organised and trained regular armed guerrilla squads without which the people's resistance could not be really effective and succeed.

In the beginning, there were the district guerrilla squads, then the zonal (taluka) and village squads were formed. But the few modern weapons were with the district squads and the zonal (taluka) and village squads had none. To resist the Razakars and police, the district squads alone were not sufficient. This was realised in practice by the Party. Taluka (zonal) squads were organised and some modern weapons were given to them also from district squads. Coordination and mutual help among district and different taluka squads was organised.

In Suryapet, Huzurnagar and Nalgonda talukas, the number in a particular squad rose from 10-20 to 100-120. They were called company squads.

These company squads, though they were a morale-booster for the guerrillas and people, had become too cumbersome and became an easy target for the enemy. The necessary training of the ordinary squad members, the training of squad leaders or the command and its auxiliary personnel at the company level was lacking. The technical military skill of a whole company going into action, the tactical coordination between its various squads and use of available fire-power and manpower was not there. The supplies to be organised, the quick dispersal and reconverging and the capacity to mount surprise and quick actions upon, and quick disengagement with the enemy was not there. Lack of this basic character of guerrilla activity would have led to irreparable losses and to total destruction, but for the very low morale and total isolation of the Nizam's forces. After some initial losses and experiences, these company formations were given up as too premature at that stage; small guerrilla squads of 10 members as a standard unit for actions were adopted. Whenever a bigger force was required two to three necessary squads were mobilised.

Later when the Indian Union military intervened, the size of these squads was reduced even further to 5 and 3 persons to evade the enemy's dragnet and to get necessary shelter and mobility for action.

The structure of all the guerrilla forces was as is described below :

**1) Village squads :** The youths in the villages joined these squads. While carrying on their own normal vocation they had to resist the Razakars and the police with muzzle-loaders and spears, see that the enemies in the village did not raise their heads; that the village moderates did not discourage or sow confusion among the people at the time of the struggles nor entice them to pay grain levy, taxes, etc. They had to carry on political propaganda amongst the people, and enthuse them and help the village committees in their day-to-day work.

**2) Village destruction squads :** These forces had to carry on their normal occupation and, on top of this, had to dig up the roads so that enemy vehicles did not come that way, keep planks full of nails on the road to puncture the tyres of the enemy's vehicles, and destroy the property of those enemies who were in the police and enemy camps. They had muzzle-loaders, spades, crowbars, baskets, planks, nails and such other things as their equipment. They had to coordinate their work with the village squads. The members of these squads were not to be exposed.

**3) Regular guerrilla squads:** In these squads, such people were recruited as had given up their own occupation, and were working as whole-timers, had courage, quick wit, and had won the people's confidence and the Party's confidence, too, and who were very much disciplined. They had limited modern weapons along with muzzle-loaders, spears, etc. Their work mainly was to resist Razakar and police raids, destroy the enemy and protect the people. Their number used to be about 10 in a squad. Whenever necessary, they used to carry out raids and immediately disperse. The village squads used to work in cooperation with these regular guerrilla squads and help them whenever necessary. Every member who was recruited into these forces had not only to take a pledge but also remember and concentrate on it always. The pledge used to be :



*"I... pledge that I am joining the guerrilla force and I have pledged with determination to destroy the exploiters' rule and establish people's raj. To fight and destroy the enemy and help the people is my only job. Weapons are more valuable than life. In getting weapons and protecting them, I am prepared to give my life. I shall never show cowardice nor submit to the enemy but shall emulate the example of glorious martyrs. I take this pledge in front of the red flag."*

After the formation of guerrilla squads, the party work was divided into two branches—political and military. This was an important step. There was regular coordination of these two branches of work. With the formation of regular guerrilla squads, a change came in the armed resistance movement. The guerrillas used to ambush or attack and fight the enemy force face to face, or raid and destroy the enemy camps. They became experts in these resistance attacks. We have seen earlier how untrained youths used to join the squads and with the help of the people, used to collect muzzle-loaders or guns raiding the houses of desh mukhs, and fought back Razakar raids. From amongst these youths, capable young men were recruited to the regular guerrilla squads. These squads with these country weapons became the nuclei of the people's armed forces that enabled the people to destroy the governmental authority in village after village and establish people's rule in about 3000 villages of Telangana.

### **Some Notable Armed Actions**

**1) Raid on Ravulapenta camp :** This was the first raid after regular district armed squads were formed. The squad wanted to destroy this camp and capture the arms. The person who was to fire at the sentry, the comrades who were to surround the camp house, and after the sentry was done away with, others who had to go in and take over the arms, were all fixed and they had taken their positions. They shot dead the sentry at 11 in the night. But the police inside fired back. Due to this police firing, the guerrillas as planned could not get inside the house. Comrade Venkata Reddy and Devabattini Venkateswar Rao, the leaders in this district squad, were courageously trying to get inside the camp. They rushed forward from their sheltered position when police

bullets hit them and both of them died on the spot. The raid failed and the guerrillas retreated with the dead bodies of their comrades; the enemy lost 2 persons and 3 others were wounded.

**2) Kotapadu Smoke Bomb :** In Suryapet taluka, near Kotapadu village, 5 Razakars and 7 policemen tried to rape a woman. They were chased by the people and the guerrilla squad. They entered the house of the landlord, Vangeti Lingareddy, and after locking themselves up on the second floor of the house, started firing at the guerrillas from behind the windows. The guerrillas posted watch all round the village and taking cover behind the walls of the houses kept up fire at them. Then the guerrillas seeing their shots being wasted, withheld fire. The enemy was firing non-stop. The villagers had gathered round and were helping the guerrillas with whatever they wanted, when one of them suggested that hay should be brought and spread round the house and set on fire, and thus smoke out the enemy. This was agreed to by the guerrillas. (This tactic was adopted in many incidents afterwards and got the name 'smoke bomb').

The villagers with great enthusiasms brought the hay from the landlord's store to the house. The landlord was begging the people not to destroy his house. He was also trying to save the Razakars but the people brushed him aside, and set fire to the hay all round. The fire spread quickly and smoke swirled up smothering the enemy. The heat became unbearable for them. The enemy cried out that they would surrender and their lives be spared. The guerrillas asked them to throw their arms first. Having no other go, the enemy accepted the guerrillas' demand. The people with their quick reaction, again brought in lots of hay and spread it on the ground like a carpet, and saw to it that no weapon thrown would get damaged. The enemy tried to dodge the guerrillas by throwing some weapons only. Meanwhile, the fire was put out.

The guerrilla leader with some squad members went up and asked the enemy to surrender. One of the policemen who had kept a rifle with him raised it against the leader. But the guerrilla squad fired at them and shot them all.

The next day, at dawn, about 600 military, police and Razakars came and surrounded the village and searched all the surrounding places for nearly 10 miles around. Unfortunately, the guerrilla squad was caught in this military encirclement but with great tact and firing away at the enemy, escaped without any loss.

Comrade Golla Komarayya was a hefty, strong man and was one of the local members accompanying the guerrillas. He was trying to save big gun, a very heavy one, from falling into the hands of the enemy. He managed to carry it a certain distance but a shot from the enemy hit him in the stomach and he fell dead. The gun was captured by the enemy. The same day the enemy set fire to the whole village of Kotapadu. People who were running away were fired at and four people were killed. This incident and the experience taught the guerrillas the lesson that after their raids, they should not be anywhere near the place of raid, but go far away, and also that they should not keep heavy weapons and arms or any other heavy material with them that would hamper their quick movement. Accordingly, directions were sent to all the squads. Further, smoking out the enemy whenever necessary and possible, also became a common tactic for all the squads.

### **3) The incident that caused heavy loss in Chintalammagudem:**

A part of the district squad was collecting information in Huzurnagar taluka. It stayed in Pedaveedu, near the hamlet of Chintalammagudem village.

Both Pedaveedu and Chintalammagudem were strong Party centres. In this village, there were experienced militant party members who had taught a good lesson to a notorious arrogant sub-inspector, Gurdayal Singh. An agricultural labour strike was going on when the landlords raised a Hindu-Muslim bogey to break the strike. Since most of the striking labourers were Muslims, the Hindu landlords stopped issuing grains to the labourers. Taking advantage of this situation, the religious heads of the Razakars were trying to organise the Muslim labourers into a separate organisation. The two village were quite tense due to this strike.

The local village comrades came to know of the presence of the squad in the vicinity and they sought help from the taluka leader. The taluka leader entered the village along with the whole squad to solve the problem. The news reached the Razakars in nearby Raghunathapalem. They and the police came down and surrounded the village. The sentry on the tree failed to notice the police and Razakars approaching. Part of the squad barred the entrance to the village preventing the enemy entering it, while another section tried to breach the enemy encirclement and effect a safe retreat.

The Razakars and the police could not enter the village and fighting went on. Comrade Linganna was wounded in the stomach. In spite of this Linganna exhibited exemplary courage and bravely made a determined bid and successfully breached the enemy column and ran for a mile. He was exhausted and was caught and killed by the mounted police who were in hot pursuit.

At last, the police and the Razakars forced their entry into the village. Comrade Sitaramaiah (original name Gopaiah) was resisting the enemy taking position behind the totem stone (*boddu rai*). A soldier who had deserted the military along with his rifle and had joined the squad a month before, betrayed and thrust a spear from behind into Sitaramaiah's back. Sitaramaiah could not move. The enemy closed in. In his last minute Sitaramaiah killed a policeman and died.

In this crisis, the remaining squad decided to abandon the resistance and retreat. When the squad came out of the village, the enemy surrounded them, comrade Sankar Reddy died of a bullet shot. Comrade Pullaiah was wounded by a spear thrust. The squad could get him out of the enemy encirclement and retreat to safety only after a stiff fight. Three from the enemy were killed. But the Party suffered a heavy loss. Three of our finest comrades were lost along with three modern weapons and four hand grenades. It was a lesson. An inexperienced military squad ignores its guerrilla rules, and suffers a great loss.

**4) Guerrillas Retaliate :** Two comrades had lost their lives during a guerrilla raid on Ravulapenta, and in the enemy raid on Chintalammagudem, three more had died. A meeting of nearly 500 members of squads from all the villages in the taluka was

held. Everyone took a pledge in memory of the dead comrades to avenge their deaths. Many members joined the district squad. This was the beginning of the company squad.

Razakars from all over, including the Raghunathapalem camp, had gathered in pedaveedu village. On the fifth day after the Chintalammagudem raid, Pedaveedu was surrounded by a guerrilla squad. All the roads to the village were blocked by them. They converged on the Razakars in the centre of the village. From morning 5 to 10 a.m. the fight went on. The Razakars climbed on to the upper storey of the houses and started firing from there at the guerrillas. The squad pressed forward to destroy the enemy. At last, remembering the katapadu smoke bomb, they decided to set fire to the houses where the enemy was entrenched. The enemy was forced to leave their positions. The squads fought on picking out the notorious Razakars from among the crowd. Six of the notorious rowdy Razakars died in this skirmish. The squad left the village amidst shouts of 'Jai' (Victory). Later the military came and took away the dead bodies. From all over the taluka, every village sent greetings to the guerrilla squad. The enemy had lost face and was more demoralised.

**5) Raid near Kandagatla wells :** A guerrilla squad and the political organiser of the centre were camping near the Kandagatla wells, when the people went there with their problems of land distribution and were discussing them. At about 10 O'clock in the day, the District Collector, having got scent of the guerrillas' camp, went to the place with 50 Razakars and policemen in civil dress. The sentry on duty was careless and the enemy was not noticed till they were within 200 yards of the squad. The guerrillas, firing at the enemy, slowly took cover behind small boulders. The enemy tried to rush them before they took cover, shooting wildly from their modern weapons. But the squad under the command of their organiser, retreated systematically in a disciplined way, with the one batch retreating while another batch covered the retreat, pinning the enemy down, till all of them reached a rocky place safely. Two of the enemy fell down in this skirmish which made the enemy stop rushing at the squad and this helped the guerrillas a good deal.

But just about two hundred yards away from the boulders, where the guerrillas had taken shelter, there were three big rocks in a triangular pattern. When the guerrillas got behind one rock, the Razakars took shelter behind the second rock. The guerrillas very quickly occupied the third rock, giving no chance to the enemy to occupy it, and started firing at the enemy from their advantageous position. The enemy was well equipped with arms and ammunition and was bigger in number, too, but could not move even one step ahead from the place where it had taken shelter. After a long fight the enemy left the field.

A notable thing here was that the people who were with the guerrillas helped the squad enthusiastically shouting information about the movements of the enemy. In spite of the squad's advice to go away, they stuck on with the confidence that the enemy could do no harm to them while the guerrillas were with them, wishing complete destruction of the enemy and complete victory for the guerrillas. The people took great care of everything that belonged to the guerrillas including their utensils. The district collector got shot near his ear in that firing and the people say that he was so frightened that he swore that he would never again be anywhere near a fighting scene.

**6) Lightning raid on Mamillagudem camp :** In Mamillagudem village (Suryapet taluka) there were about 50 policemen who used to run amuck in the surrounding areas, harass the people and at night molest the women. Hearing this, two guerrilla members dressed themselves in white clothes, hid their bore-guns (*totatupaki*) under the chaddars which were wrapped round their bodies and went to the camp at night when the policemen had gathered together and were gossiping and enjoying themselves. Suddenly a country-made hand grenade burst amidst them and bullets started flying. Three policemen died. After this, the enemy stopped coming out to harass the villagers at night. Instead, at the slightest sound, they used to get frightened and used to fire aimlessly.

**7) Raid on Bikkumalla palm-groves :** Forty Razakars, policemen and deshmuks' goondas raided Bikkumalla village. They made arrangements for cooking their food in the village and were going to the neighbouring village machinapalli for

raiding it. The guerrilla squad which was resting in the streamlets near the village and behind the boulders, came to know of the enemy's movements through the alertness of the sentry. After using binoculars and making sure, the guerrillas moved on. The squad divided itself into two batches. One was to enter the village and the other was to take cover in the ditches and crevices in the land on the other side of the village to prevent the enemy from coming into the village and getting an upper hand. As the enemy approached, the guerrillas from all sides fired at them simultaneously. The enemy lost ground and started running. The squad chased them. A mile ahead the enemy entered a palm-grove and fired back at the guerrillas. The guerrillas also turned towards the trees on the sides of the grove. The enemy's plan of not allowing the guerrillas to enter the palm-grove was foiled. The guerrillas who had entered the grove pressed on the enemy from three sides. The grove was resounding with echoes of shooting.

The villagers about 3-4 miles away also realised that a battle was going on just near them. People from Chinnanemili, Peddanemili and Bikkumalla came out and were watching this fierce fight from a distance, ardently desiring victory to the guerrillas. The enemy resisted at every step till 2 in the noon. They were taking cover of the palm trees one after another and were firing wildly. The guerrillas were using their bullets sparingly to kill the enemy and were moving forward. They drove the enemy out of the palm-grove. The enemy leaving their transport mules, and their food, etc., behind, ran back to safety to the Errapadu camp. Four of them were injured in this fight.

**8) Razakars murder in chitakoduru :** Razakars from Jangaon used to come to help the Revenue Officer in Chitakoduru (Jangaon taluka) and used to harass the toddy-tappers. One day six Razakars raped one of their women. After that they started going about even unarmed thinking that no one would dare to obstruct them. One day, three Razakars who were sitting in a palm-grove drinking toddy, were caught by the guerrillas, with the cooperation of the people. One of them, who was earlier in the guerrilla squads was let off after admonition. He reported to

the Razakars' camp. On the third day, about 200 Razakars and police swooped on the village and killed several comrades including Kottha Veera Reddy, Kottha Raj Reddy, Kondam Hanumayya, Ayyoru Ramayya. The village was set on fire and destroyed.

**9) Razakars and police raids on Puligilla village—22 people murdered :** In Puligilla village of old Bhongir taluka, the guerrilla organiser had called the people outside the village and was holding a meeting. Getting this information through traitors, about 30 Razakars and police from the Mustyalapalli camp came in a lorry to attack. The sentry on duty informed the guerrillas who went a furlong away and took cover behind boulders. As the Razakars came into the unprotected space, the guerrillas who were at a height on the boulders, fired first at them. The enemy had no cover but immediately they lay down on the ground and started firing. But their bullets hit no one. After some time, with no other way out, they called their lorry nearer and taking cover behind it, slowly got into it and drove away. There were no losses on either side. The enemy felt insulted by this incident and again they attacked the village and killed whomsoever they could get. This way 22 people became victims of the enemy's fire.

**10) Fight to get Addaguduru camp abolished :** The Razakars and the police established a camp in Addaguduru (Ramannapet taluka) as a base for raiding the surrounding villages. About 50 Razakars and police were in the camp. The squads collected about 500 people from all the surrounding villages and came to the spot. By the time, they arrived at the village, it had become dark, so they camped for the night in Moolaregadi hamlet on the outskirts of the village. They had thought of attacking the camp in the morning. This news reached the police through informers and they took the initiative and attacked the guerrilla squads at four in the morning.

*The sentry on duty raised the alarm seeing the police, and the people and the guerrillas rushed out on the enemy pelting them with stones. The enemy was firing at the people and was moving forward, while the people were taking cover or lying on the*



ground to avoid the bullets and they were scattered all over the place. The guerrillas fired back on the enemy. Four of the enemy died on the spot and three were wounded. The enemy took the dead and wounded and went back. The comrades who were in the leading position, Nanneboyina Sayanna (Adimpet) and Podichedu Lingayya (Anachipuram) were wounded by enemy bullets. Lingayya was hit in the stomach and died on the spot. Sayanna, who was a very strong man, was hit in the head and was on the verge of death. The guerrilla squad was treating him and was searching for others who might have fallen wounded. It was daylight by then and the police returned with renewed vigour and started firing from a distance. One man in the village got hit in the thigh and his leg was broken. The squads fired back and retreated. The enemy entered the village and pierced the throat of Sayanna, who was already gasping, with a bayonet. But after this fight the Addaguduru camp was abolished.

**11) A woman's honour safeguarded in Anantapur :** Twenty policemen came to Anantapur (Jangaon) and started harassing the people. Four of them forcibly dragged a woman behind some trees. The squad which was nearby rushed to protect the woman. Seeing them the police opened fire but the guerrillas taking cover behind the well moats returned the fire. Taking this opportunity the woman escaped. The police who were in the village, harassing the people, rushed at the squad, firing. The squad stopped the police from coming forward with the only rifle they had with them. After this skirmish, the police and the squad left the place. The people were very happy that they were saved by the guerrillas from the police harassment and celebrated the victory.

**12) Fight for releasing the levy grain carts near konduru :** About 15 policemen had forcibly collected levy grains in Padisala and Yelamaigudem villages and loading it on 20 carts, were taking them via Konduru village. All these villages were in the old Bhongir taluka. The guerrillas who had only muzzle-loaders with them took cover behind the tail-end of the line of carts and fired shots at the enemy, who were in the front. The police took cover behind the carts in front and fired back with their rifles and goaded the drivers to speed up. One of the squad members put a

lead ball along with the gunpowder in the muzzle-loader and fired. It shot up like a bullet with a big sound. The police were frightened. While shooting was going on, some carts from the rear turned back and escaped.

**In Nasimpet :** The Razakars and police were forcibly taking away the levy grain putting it on carts from Nasimpet village in Suryapet taluka, when the guerrillas under the leadership of Comrade Gopal Reddy stopped them and shot four of the enemy dead. The cart drivers also ran away. The enemy, who were lying on the ground firing wildly, ran away after some time, leaving the carts behind. Afterwards the villagers with the help of the guerrillas handed the grains back to the owners.

**In Nutanakallu :** 160 bags of levy paddy was restored to the peasants by the combined action of the guerrillas and the people.

**In Ammanabrolu village :** About 20 Razakars and police came to Ammanabrolu village of old Bhongir taluka and forcibly collected levy grain and loading it on carts, started out. The guerrillas overtook them about a furlong away from the village and taking cover of the Musi canal bund, opened fire on the enemy who left the rear carts but drove off with the carts in front. The carts in the rear, left behind, returned to the village and the grain was returned to the peasants.

**13) Fight against cavalry raids :** About 30 Razakars and police mounted on horses surrounded the village of Arruru (old Bhongir taluka) early in the morning. They raided, looted some houses and molested some women. All the villagers were rounded up and brought to the foot of a hillock under tamarind trees. The police were busy taking out tamarind birches for beating the villagers. It was 9 in the morning. Hearing this news, the squad with 40 members divided itself into three batches, and planned to attack the enemy. As decided, one batch got on top of one of the bungalows in the village, the second got up on the hillock under which the villagers were herded and the third took position in a small tank on the other side of the village and from all the sides all fired simultaneously. Two enemy horses which were tied up died at once and the enemy lay flat on the ground. The villagers got free and went back into the village. The enemy had

no cover, so they crawled along to the animals' shed and got inside. But from there, their bullets could not hit the guerrillas. On the other hand, the bullets from the bungalow were hitting the shed directly. The enemy was taking cover behind the walls of the shed but they were undecided as to how long they could stand there like that. They could not get out. The squad after some time retreated. And the enemy, heaving a sigh of relief, without even looking back, ran away.

**Velamajala village :** In Velamajala village (old Bhongir taluka) the squad was holding a public meeting when 12 mounted armed men came. The sentry informed the squad. They dispersed the meeting and went out of the village. But the police on their horses rushed after them at a great speed. It was an open place with no protection or cover for the squad members who were firing at the enemy and trying to escape. Comrade Ganta Papi Reddy, with great courage, stood up and shot at the Amin (sub-inspector) with his muzzle-loader. It missed the Amin very narrowly. But then the enemy concentrated all their fire on that comrade, he was hit in the chest. Knowing that he was sure to die, this hero stood up and gave a fight with only one idea, and that was to enable the other squad members to escape by drawing the enemy's fire on to himself.

Ganta Papi Reddy belonged to Kaprayapalli village, Bhongir taluka. He joined the guerrilla forces and was active in the whole area. He saved his comrades sacrificing his own life.

**Rapaka village :** From Mothukuru camp a cavalry unit of ten raided Rapaka village (old Bhongir taluka.) The guerrilla squad which was in the village was trying to escape when the enemy spotted them and chased them. Even before the guerrillas crossed the village border, the horses were on them. The guerrillas lay flat on the ground and opened fire at the enemy. Unable to withstand the guerrilla squad's fire, the enemy turned back and went away. While returning, they found Comrade Kondukuru Mallayya, Adimpet village leader, who was unarmed and was trying to escape, and they shot him dead. The experience in this raid gave confidence to the people and the guerrillas that mounted armed forces could also be fought back successfully.

**Skirmish in palm-groves of Solipet :** On getting information that the company squad was in the palm-grove of Solipet village (Nalgonda taluka), about 40 Razakars with 20 mounted police came in the morning at 11 a.m. to that place. The squad took the initiative and taking cover behind palm tress showered the enemy with bullets from three sides. One horse and two policemen died immediately. The rest ran away firing back. Those who ran away were chased quite a distance by the guerrillas. To take revenge for this defeat, and to put down the people's enthusiasm, the Razakars resorted to terrorisation, shot dead seven people in Ogodu, six in Kaparathi and five in Vallela.

**14) Stiff resistance in Errabelli village hillock :** One day the police raided the village of Errabelli (Warangal taluka). The squad which was taking food in the village chased them. The police hid themselves amongst the people and slowly went away. The squad could not shoot because of fear of hitting the people.

Sixty military men from the Mulkapuar camp, in Huzurabad taluka, had raided Narayanagiri and Mupparam village. They harassed the Errabelli villagers also and were drinking toddy in the palm-groves of that village, and were getting their food ready. The squad followed the military wherever it went. All along these three villages there are small hillocks in a line. They are called 'Inuparathi Gatlu'. The squad members camouflaged themselves with tree branches and went along the hillocks. At last, they took their positions behind the rocks of the hillocks on the way from Errabelli to the Mulkapur camp. At about 5 in the evening, the military men, fully drunk, were coming along that road in four big carts. People were being made to carry the cooked food on their heads. Some military men were walking behind the people. Only the first cart was a riding cart with a top on. The others were big carts without any cover.

As soon as they came within the firing line, the guerrillas fired at the carts with their rifles, guider and other weapons. Especially the guider fired bullets right at the enemy. At the first blow, 11 died and some more were wounded. Their officer who was in the first cart ran away and was not traced. The remaining military men took cover behind the carts and started shooting.

The people who were carrying the enemy's food and the soldiers behind them ran away. One bullock died and the rest stampeded away. A rifle which was hung on one of the carts also went with it. The dead and injured were lying on the road but the rest of the military men were not allowing the squad members to approach with their fire. Yet the squad gave a stiff fight. Both sides had full cover. Till 8 in the night, the battle went on. As it would be dangerous if more military came in, the squad withdrew. Afterwards the military did receive reinforcements, searched the hillocks with the help of light bombs, shooting all the time, collected their dead and wounded and went away. The squad got the rifle which was hanging on the cart from the cart-owner in the village and it was given the name "Errabelli rifle". The squad used to take great pride in owning that rifle. Three days after the incident, the military came back to that same village and shot dead three lambadi men.

**15) In Kothakonda :** In Huzurabad taluka, the squad was surprised by the armed police, as the sentry fell asleep, but returning fire the squad retreated to the hillocks. The military chased them. Yet, the squad members reached the hillocks and protected themselves. But two students *Ramachandram (Karimnagar)* and *Devanandam (Warangal)*, who had come to meet the squad, could not run with them and took cover behind a cattleshed. Both of them were caught, tied together and shot dead. After the military went away, the squad came back searching for their losses and finding the dead bodies, gave them a proper funeral. The person who was the cause of all this was done away with. After this, the squad held a meeting and removed the leader, who had shown weakness at the crucial moment and chose another one.

**16) Heavy blow at lingampalli :** There were two squads in Lingampalli (Huzurabad taluka). They had kept watch outside the village but one of the squad leaders was carelessly having his shave. When the police came near him he ran shouting the alarm. The other members firing at the police tried to escape from the encirclement and were partially successful. Comrades Narra Gopal Reddy (Jangaon taluka), Regula Outhapuram, Malla

Reddy (Pasaramadla), Boda Ailayya (Marrigada), and two other Huzurabad comrades died in this fight. This happened at 11 a.m.

**17) Fight in Manukota taluka :** About 100 policemen surrounded the squad, which was in Chetlamupparam village. That was a forest area. Yet due to the carelessness of the sentry, the police were unnoticed till they surrounded the whole area. The squad leader, with great courage, fired from his sten-gun all round at the approaching enemy. Ten of the enemy died and many were injured. The rest of the police lay flat on the ground. A big gap was formed where the enemy had died. And the enemy lying flat with fright, gave the guerrillas a chance to get out of the encirclement. But the enemy started firing again at the guerrillas who had slipped out of their dragnet. The squad leader kept up the fire at the enemy and did not allow them to step forward. Three bullets hit him in the arm, but with that broken arm, he held on to his sten-gun and with blood streaming from the wounds, retreated a little and took cover behind some shrubs. With the fire from the guerrillas' side stopping, the enemy came forward and searched the area following the bloodstains. They searched the place around the shrubs where he was hiding. At last, it became dark and the enemy took their dead bodies and went back. After that the squad leader who was left alone, thirsty, and very weak from loss of blood, with great difficulty reached a village nearby and with the help of the villagers went to a safe hiding place. From there he was sent to another safer place for treatment, when he had to cross the enemy line in a palanquin in the garb of a woman. But for the timely presence of mind and great courage of that squad leader, the whole squad, consisting of 40 members, would have been completely wiped out.

**18) Ammanabrolu fight :** Seventy Razakars and policemen from the Mothukuru camp had raided Ammanabrolu village (old Bhongir taluka). They set fire to the houses and were taking the Muslim villagers from that place along with them. As the police entered the village, information was sent to the people of the surrounding villages. By 9 in the morning, thousands of people gathered along with the local squad. They closed the only road

to the village across the Musi river. They made a breach in the road and camouflaged it with light fallen trees with a slight mud cover with earth dug up from the other side of the river where one had to get out. Having done this, they hid themselves under the trees on the high banks of the river, As soon as the Razakars and the police got into the river, they were surrounded by the people, who loudly shouted slogans and gave the enemy a fright.

The people threatened the enemy and asked them to surrender their arms. The whole area was resounding with their shouting and slogans. Then they started pelting stones and firing muzzle-loaders. The enemy who was taking about 50 families of Muslim villagers with them, made them clear up the road, and all the while went on firing at the people, not allowing them to go near. Parna Janaki Reddi (25 years), Ammanabrolu squad leader, went ahead and fired his muzzle-loader, but an enemy bullet killed him. People rescued the dead body and the weapon. Another comrade from the village fired at the enemy when he got his leg broken by a bullet. He also was taken away by the people, along with his gun.

People could not go forward due to the incessant fire kept up by the enemy but with the strong desire to destroy the enemy, they would not go back. This went on for some hours. Meanwhile, the road was cleared and the enemy crossed the river. They were, all the time, firing away, not allowing the people to come nearer. People also were firing the muzzle-loaders and using their slings. As the enemy approached the Bujulapuram hillocks, *Guggilla Mallayya*, who was one of the Bujulapuram squad members hiding behind a boulder, threw a stone at the enemy.

Before he could throw another stone, the enemy's bullet hit him and killed him. The enemy quickly stepped out of those hillocks as it was getting dark. After this, the people gave a proper cremation to the dead bodies in their respective villages. The people fought heroically for three hours, chasing the enemy from their villages.

**19) People's fight in Vadlakonda :** The villagers in Vadlakonda, armed with muzzle-loaders and slings, used to take

up positions at the beat of the drum. Once the police and Razakars raided the village but local volunteers and the guerrilla squad drove them away. After 15 days, military men surrounded the village. People noticed this and beat the drum. The local squad and people took cover behind the wall around the village and pelted stones and fired from their muzzle-loaders. The military used automatic weapons also. They fired innumerable shots. Comrade Yadagiri who had broken a soldier's leg with his sling, got hit in the stomach and died. Kummari Narasimhulu who was firing a muzzle-loader under cover, got hit in the thigh and broke his leg. Another comrade who was firing from behind the well got hit by the enemy's bullet in the stomach. After this the enemy broke through into the village. Now the people had no protection. They threw their arms into the wells but were beaten up mercilessly. Just then, about 300 people from Cheetakoduru came there with their slings and muzzle-loaders to help the people of Vadlakonda. But they could not stand the enemy's fire and had to turn back.

**20) Fight in Akunuru :** Akunuru is a historic place in Jangaon taluka. In 1945, the people there had revolted against the forced levy and made the police and the officers retreat before their wrath. After this the Government had sent a big force of armed police who took revenge on the people, molesting and raping a large number of women. But even then, the people did not give up their fight. They were ready to fight the Razakars and police with their muzzle-loaders and slings and had built up manchas (high-level stands from where the peasants drive away birds in ripened millet fields) for keeping watch and warning of the enemy's approach.

One day, the Razakars came near the village and sent word that if the people paid them Rs. 10,000 they would not be harassed. But the people flatly refused to pay. The Razakars fired shots from outside and the people from inside. The Razakars had to retreat. The guerrilla squad, which meanwhile had rushed there, killed two Razakar stragglers. A few days later, a large number of military came at 4 in the morning and surrounded the village. At daybreak, the sentries on the watch platform in the



jowar fields saw them and the drum was beaten. People took cover behind the walls and faced the enemy. But the enemy kept up fire without stop with bren and sten-guns. Seven people died in this fight. Two of them with muzzle-loaders gripped in their hands fell dead. The military entered the village and completely burnt it. Three thousand bags of grain were destroyed by the fire.

**21) Great battle at Bairanpalli (Jangaon-Warangal border) :**

The Bairanpalli people's battle was a high-watermark in the history of the Telangana people's struggle. In that village every man, woman, young and old, had taken their place in this battle and at every step had fought back the enemy. The village itself became a fierce battlefield. In this village, there was a tall battlement. This was very old but yet was very strong, like a fort. This battlement had steps inside it. From this tall battlement, one could see for a long distance all round the village. On the battlement a big drum, a big country gun (*jhajjayi*) and a *karabbi* were kept. Gunny bags full of gunpower and lead ball also were stored up. a squad used to be permanently on the battlement. They had sufficient guns, arms and ammunition. In case the enemy was able to go up the battlement, the squad had spears, sticks, stones, slings and even boiling water ready, to throw them down again. They had kept sentries all round the village and on every road a fighting squad was always on duty. They were all ready to give fight to the enemy at any hour. A regular guerrilla squad was there to assist and reinforce them.

One day about 60 Razakars and policemen from the Laddanur camp raided it. Those on the battlement beat the drum and fired their country gun (*jajjayi*) and *karabbi*, and raised battle cries. The enemy was confounded and stood at a distance from the village. Meanwhile, 200 people with slings and muzzle-loaders, went after the enemy. There was a face-to-face fight for some time. But the enemy could not stand the people's attack and ran away.

Another day, about 70 Razakars and policemen from the same camp, determined to defeat the people, again raided the village. But again the people who were ready faced them. One of the local squad members, like a lion, jumped on the enemy and caught

hold of one Razakar's rifle and kicked him in the stomach. But in this fight the rifle went off and the comrade got hit. Even then, he did not give up the rifle. The enemy by this time was running away, not being able to stand the people's fury. That Razakar also gave up his rifle and ran away. The rifle was got and the comrade after being treated, recouped his health, joined the ranks again.

The Razakars many a time tried to raid the village but seeing the people's readiness to fight back, retreated. These villager's determination to defend their village infected other villages—Dhoolimitta, Akunuru, Lingapuram, Kootigallu, etc. They used to gather at the beat of the drum, and after the enemy left, they too returned. They received military training as to how to face a bigger enemy, or how to avoid the enemy fire by lying flat on the ground, etc.

One day, the guerrilla squad was in the village and was eating groundnuts, when at about 8 in the morning, 200 Razakars and the police came to raid it. The guerrillas got on to the battlement. They fired the country gun and the *karabbi*, rifle shots also were fired. This exchange of fire went on for some time. Then the guerrillas remembered the experience of Comrade Renigunta Rami Reddi's fight. If they continued to be on the defensive their bullets would get exhausted, and they would come into the encirclement of the enemy. So they came down from the battlement, took cover behind the walls and started firing at the enemy, taking proper aim. One policemen who was setting fire to a house fell dead. From the battlement, from behind the walls, the fire was kept up. Five policeman died. The enemy was given no respite and so they took to their heels, carrying their dead along with them.

After a few days, news came that the enemy was coming on a far bigger scale. The people and the squad were all ready. One day at dawn, 500 Razakars and policemen surrounded the village. From the battlement, from behind the walls, from behind the enemy and from outside the village, fire was opened on the enemy. One policemen who got up a tree to fire at those on the battlement was hit by a rifle shot and fell dead. The enemy could not even pick up the dead body. Nine more died, they could not carry those nine dead bodies, so they threw them into a well outside the village and ran away.

Another day, in the morning, 200 Razakars and policemen again surrounded the village. One policeman, on horse-back and with a rifle in his hand, was moving around. From the battlement, as usual the drum was beaten and guns opened fire. The guerrilla squad was outside the village in the mango-grove. Unseen by the police and creeping along the ground, they fired at the policemen on horse-back and he fell dead. After some more deaths, and some wounded, the enemy gathered the bodies and took to their heels.

A large force of military men had come down to Jangaon for raids on Bairanpalli and Kootigallu. The party leaders sent word through an important comrade that the guerrillas should leave the village, and also get people to vacate but these instructions were not carried out. By 6 in the morning, the military had surrounded the village and was shooting. The military also faced the people's fire. But the military fire was not like the police shooting. The military had come armed with cannon, brens, fire bombs and many other modern weapons. Some soldiers died at the hands of the guerrillas who were taking aim and shooting sharp. Amongst them was the soldier who was firing the cannon. The military turned its attention on the guerrillas and fired fire bombs, cannons and brens. The squad could not stand there and retreated beyond the enemy's gun range.

In the village, those on the battlement top were firing the country gun and from the lower storey from the *karabbi* and the enemy was facing a barrage of shots. The people were fighting from behind the walls. In this fight 13 including a military captain were killed or wounded. But before the enemy's cannons, resistance was fading. A big breach was made in the top storey of the battlement. Three comrades who were firing the country gun on top, Motam Posalu, Motam Ramulu (brothers) and Balije Nagayya died. Others got down. Some more from among the people and the local squad members also died. Many escaped realising that the enemy was far too powerful and had all the modern weapons.

Eighty people were rounded up and tied and shot dead by machine-gun fire. Some youths who had fought heroically were mercilessly tortured and then shot dead.

By next morning, when the guerrilla squads from all round converged onto the village, 88 dead bodies were lying there. The guerrillas gave the people courage and consolation. Then the dead were cremated and all people turned up to pay homage to the martyrs. The father of Posalu and Ramulu, overcoming his grief at the loss of his two sons, urged upon the area commander to take revenge on the butchers and the Government and fight till final victory.

**22) Kootigallu—another battlefield :** Kootigallu village (Jangaon taluka) also like Bairanpalli had been raided many a time by the Razakars. People fought them back successfully. All the arrangements were made on the battlement and the Razakars and police were thrown back. The guerrilla squad also was helping them.

Once the Razakars and police who belonged to that village, but had gone away, came back to take away their cattle. The battle drum was beaten. People did not allow them to enter the village. One comrade fixed up a palm fruit on a spear and went after them shouting “bomb, bomb”. They got panicky and ran away. While running away they found a villager and attacked him. He got enraged and with his axe killed two Razakars outright. The others fell on him and plucked out his eyes and then with the axe cut him to pieces. After that they used to be afraid to go near anyone who had a stick or an axe with him.

Another time, 500 Razakars and policemen came. The guerrilla squad was in the village itself. The drum was beaten. People got ready. The enemy was halted at a distance and took cover behind the palm trees and the bunds in the fields and opened fire. Both sides kept up the fire for some hours. From three sides the people and the guerrillas surrounded the enemy and pressed on. When they were not able to stand it they ran away. The people and guerrillas chased them and drove them to Gugillapuram, about half a mile from the Madduru camp.

On the day of the battle in Bairanpalli, about 200 military raided this village, too. Here also some people, believing the desh mukh, instead of escaping stayed on. The fighting squad from the the battlement came down. Some were killed in the

village and some were taken to a banyan tree outside the village and shot dead. Twenty people died in this battle, either while fighting with guns in hand or after capture by the military. Amongst those who died on the battlement, there was Comrade Yembayya of Ganapuram (Siddipet taluka). He had fought against the deshmukh in his village and had driven 30 of that deshmukh's cattle to Kootigallu and while on that mission he fought heroically and was killed. When the guerrilla squad went there, the dead bodies were lying all over. One comrade who had a little breath left was lifted by the guerrillas and he breathed his last in their arms.

After the military raids on these two villages, the Razakars and police again came there to loot. They thought that there would be no one alive to resist them. Four hundred Razakars and policemen got into Bairanpalli, and started looting the houses and setting fire to them. They had got up on the battlement and were trying to demolish it with crowbars. The squad which was having its meeting a little distance away, got the news and came down immediately and attacked. Two of those who were on the battlements fell down to the ground and died. The enemy could just retrieve the dead bodies, and leaving their carts and their loot, ran away wildly shooting at the people.

Three hundred Razakars and policemen surrounded Kootigallu village also, setting fire to houses and haystacks. The guerrillas who were outside the village took cover behind trees and fired at the enemy. Three of them died. Just at that time, a shell which had lodged in a haystack during an earlier raid, exploded with a very big sound. After this incident, till the "police action", no Razakar or police came to raid this village.

**23) Raids on Wardhannapeta :** An eighteen-member squad under the leadership of Comrade Junugu Butchireddy went to Kolanupalle (Warangal taluka) and was distributing the land of the landlords at about 11 in the morning. Hiding their arms at one place, the people and the squad were busy in the distribution work. So enthused were they that they did not care to keep a sentry. In such a situation, 30 Razakars and policemen came from Rayaparthi camp and encircled all of them. Only two

members of the squad could make good their escape. The rest of the squad members were tortured but none of them gave information about the place where weapons were hidden. They said that they had no weapons at all. The police gave up hope of getting weapons from them, but when they searched the squad commander, they found a notebook in which were written the names of the members of the village committee of the Party, village leaders and such other details.

On the basis of this list, they went to Gannavaram village along with the squad. All the menfolk escaped from the village and only women were found there. All of them were herded together and they were beaten to force them to give information about village leaders and volunteers, but they pleaded ignorance. Similarly, they tortured the squad members before the women to get the names of families who helped them. But they failed to get even a single bit of information. The women who saw this were happy that the guerrillas kept the secrets and this emboldened them further. The womenfolk started abusing the enemy and threatened to take their lives if they dared to touch them.

The Razakars searched the whole village and found the old peasant Rajili Venkatareddi. Even he was not spared and was beaten. Then they set fire to about ten houses, one of which belonged to a squad member and which contained a rifle; the ammunition caught fire and blasted with a terrific sound. The police got the fright of their lives; they thought that another squad had come and took to their heels, taking the squad members along with them. They were kept in the camp and were beaten up.

The same night, people prepared themselves to secure the release of their squad members. The two squad members, Comrades Kukkala Ramulu and Battini Komarelli, who had escaped being caught, led the people and went to Wardhannapet where the squad members were being kept in custody. This huge wave of mass enthusiasm frightened the police and they fled from the camp. People entered the camp, broke open the gates and locks and secured the release of their beloved sons. This created quite a sensation among the people in the whole area.

Within three days of this incident, squads belonging to Warangal and Jangam talukas met together and decided to demolish the camps at both Rayaparthi and Wardhannapet and drew up a plan to mobilise thousands of local people.

Hundreds of people marched on to the Wardhannapet camp at about 11 a.m. and surrounded the whole village. The village was on the trunk road and there was not enough protection. Yet, the people did not mind this and marched on to the camp. The enemy fled the camp and got onto a high mound nearby and started firing on the people. One was wounded in the thigh. The people did not get frightened and took shelter behind the walls. The guerrillas returned the fire.

While this gun-battle was going on, people raided the houses of Razakars and other enemies of the people in the village. Seventy bags of paddy, 200 heads of cattle and a lot of other property were confiscated. It was, however, not possible for the squad to attack the enemy since they were in a very good protected place. The squads and people returned while the enemy forces fled from Wardhannapet to Warangal.

The same night a large crowd of people along with squads reached Rayaparthi village at about 11 p.m. The very approach and sight of this mass of people was enough for the Razakars in the village to flee to Warangal. None of the enemy could be caught. But their houses were raided, 200 bags of paddy and cartloads of other things were confiscated. A big bungalow belonging to Razakar leader Shamsuddin, costing about Rs. 80,000, was razed to the ground. Houses of other enemies were also brought down. The confiscated property was distributed among the people.

### **Khammam-Madhira-Kothagudem (Palvancha) Area :**

This area, bordering the Krishna and West Godavari districts, with the Palvancha forest area on the river Godavari as its eastern part, had special economic features, somewhat distinct from the rest of the Telangana area. It was economically better developed, with the growth of a rich and middle peasantry. It had greater social and economic links with the Andhra area.

Here the movement was based more than in other areas on the demands of the middle peasants and rich peasantry rather than those of agricultural labour and poor peasantry. During 1942-45, agitation was carried on against grain levy, for supply of agricultural goods like iron bands for wheels for bullock carts, etc.

It was also a stronghold of the Andhra Mahasabha. Most of the Andhra Mahasabha leaders like Comrades Chirravuri Lakshmi Narsayya, S. Ramanatham and others had joined the Communist Party in 1940 itself. And it was under their leadership that in 1945, the Telangana Andhra Mahasabha held its last and biggest session here, more than 20,000 persons attending the open rally.

When the Nizam refused to join the Indian Union and the State Congress stated a Satyagraha movement, the Communist Party and the Andhra Mahasabha actively participated in it. They led big demonstrations, broke forest laws; customs posts were made a special target of attack.

The Nizam Government had set up big Razakar camps in all towns and key centres like Khammam, Madhira, Bonakalu, Nalakondapalli, Kallur and Wyra from where they used to raid neighbouring villages. The Nizam's military squads were posted at every railway station, apart from a regular military patrol train on the railway line from Mahdira to Warangal.

After the decision to take up arms, the Nizam police and administrative post at partial, an enclave in Nandigama taluka, Krishna district, was successfully raided; four muskets and 20 muzzle-loaders and about Rs. 1300 in cash were seized. Similarly, a determined attack on the Motamarri railway military post, by the district guerrilla squad yielded a few more rifles, and a few of the military men were killed or wounded.

From the landlords in the different parts of these plains villages squads seized about 40 shot-guns and armed themselves better—village squads with muzzle-loaders and regular guerrilla squads with shot-guns and with one or more modern weapons.

The Congress had organised a camp of its own in Tunikipadu, in tiruvur taluka bordering Kallur area under the leadership of



Jalagam Vengal Rao (a rabid anti-Communist and in 1969-71, the Home Minister and later the Minister of Industry in the Andhra Pradesh Government). The Communist Party was able to win over a section of them, and later the camp was disbanded, but guerrillas were able to get 12 rifles from them.

By April 1948, were able to organise six firka squads each of 20 persons, and also 40-50 squads of koya people, consisting of about 1,000 persons, apart from 50-60 village squads.

**Winning over of Koya youth and people :**

Perintalapalli Sadhu Singaraju used to conduct an ashram for koya tribal people. Many young koyas were attracted to this camp. This was helped and encouraged by the Congress, both from the Union and Nizam areas. They were given some armed training as well. Hopes were roused among them that they would be free to establish a koya tribal administration and all their woes would forever end. The ashram was on the banks of the river Godavari where Alluri Sitaramaraju had led the koya people in the nearby Agency areas of East Godavari and Vizag against the British zulum during 1922-24. Those members were still smouldering.

The Communist Party established contact with these koya youth, took classes, held discussions and a good number of them were won over.

The party was able to frustrate the efforts of Hemendroff (a missionary who was deputed to enquire into the conditions of tribal people, gonds and koyas, and suggest remedies) to win over the koya people by his officially-sponsored social and economic palliatives.

The Party's success was due to its slogans of koya autonomous area in People's Vishalandhra, end to the forest officers's zulum and corrupt practices, and its work in helping the koya people to the free use of forest produce. We put an end to the forced labour, usury and rack-renting indulged in by the landlords in Potuvarigudem, a key koya village in the Palvancha forest area. This had spread the Party's influence throughout the areas. Similarly, the Razakar and police camp at Mulkalapalli was attacked by the guerrilla squads and it was abandoned later; in

“gadies”. The total number in these squads was about 400. For some time, these were company squads based on Pindiprolu, Sankeesa, Garla and Metarajupalli. In the clashes with the Nizam police and military at Chetlamupparam, Sreeramegiri and Janapadu, the guerrillas suffered losses. Garla organiser Comrade Venkateswar Rao died in the Bucchimatla clash.

In the month of June 1948 alone, 50 persons including two organisers were shot dead, among whom 38 were in the Garla area alone.

The company squads were disbanded, the scattered squad members were reorganised, and within the next two months, by the time of the “police action”, the guerrillas with constant raids forced the Nizam police and Razakars to vacate 16 camps. Railway track to the length of one kilometre was destroyed, the Abbayapalem-Manukota road was also destroyed. More than 1,000 people participated in these actions. In 30 villages surplus land was distributed leaving 5 acres wet and 50 acres dry to the landlord families in this area.

**Allinagaram** of Madhira taluka was a stronghold of the Andhra Mahasabha. From this village many joined the Communist Party and the guerrilla squads. After the military outpost in nearby Motamarri village was raided and weapons were seized by guerrillas, 200 Razakars and military raided Allinagaram village and the whole village was burnt and razed to the ground.

On January 13, 1948, the people of *Meenavolu village* of Madhira taluka resisted a Razakar raid and drove them back. In this fight, Comrades Tota Venkayya, Tota Lalayya, Bandi Veerayya, Mettala Sreeramulu, Lakkiseti Lakshmi Narasayya, Ratakondo Venkayya lost their lives. But the people succeeded in killing the commander of the Razakars, seized his rifle and handed it over to the guerrilla squad. But the next day, 200 military attacked the village and burnt it down. Three old men, Rampalli Ramayya, Pilla Kotayya, Sukhaboga Muttayya, were shot dead. The villagers erected a memorial column for the martyrs and paid homage to their memory every year.

**Rayanapeta** of Madhira taluka was raided by Razakar. Cattle were seized and were being driven out when the guerrilla squad attacked the Razakars. Comrades Pagidipalli Jogayya of Kalakota village, Bodepudi Pullayya of Rayanapeta, who had left their studies and joined the guerrilla squad, were caught by the Razakars and taken to the Bommakallu camp where they were tortured and shot dead.

Muttayya of *Proddutur village*, Khammam taluka, died in firing by Razakar, when the people of Lakshmipuram and Govindapuram fought back the Razakar raids with their catapults and stones.

Machha pattayya and Talluri Appayya, two peasant militants, were shot dead by Razakars in the Siripuram (*Kanakagiri village*) of Madhira taluka. This village was a stronghold of the Andhra Mahasabha. Many houses and 50 head of cattle were burnt by Razakars.

**Action against Razakar and Nizam military camps :** Thousands of people were mobilised to destroy the road communications of the Razakar and military camps. The Bonakalu-Wyra and Kodada-Khammam-Seetampet road were the main targets of the people's attack. Long stretches were dug up and made useless for military traffic. The lankapalli bridge on the Aswaraopet road was destroyed, using dynamite, and by people in thousands using crowbars, etc.

The Kothagudem mines are located in this area. The Party had considerable influence among the workers there. It used to get a large amount of gelignite sticks and necessary detonators which were used in these operations as well as for making crude bombs. This source continued not only during the fight against the Razakars and Nizam but later also during the fight against the Indian Union army.

Regular guerrilla squads mounted a series of surprise attacks on the Razakars and Nizam military camps. The attack on the camp near Gannavaram, which was located in an open place, resulted in the death of two military men and later on the camp was abolished.

Attack on the camp at Kallur, which had a large Muslim population, which used to support the Nizam, was attempted a number of times, but for lack of local people's cooperation, no effective attack could be carried out.

The attack on Mulkalapalli on the Dammapeta-Palvancha road, with thousands of koya people participating, ultimately forced the Nizam to abolish it.

**On Kodada-Khammam Road :** a lorry-load of armed police used to daily patrol the road linking Seetampeta with the Kodada-Khammam road. The district guerrilla squad decided to ambush it and snatch the arms. The squad took cover behind the rocks in three batches at short distances. The middle batch was to open guider (small sub-machinegun) fire after the armed police lorry passed the first batch of the squad and approached the middle sector. If the lorry proceeded further without surrendering, the third batch was to keep up the fire and throw a hand-grenade into the lorry itself. If the lorry tried to turn back and flee, the first batch was to cut off its retreat.

The police, in the lorry, came standing, singing and shouting. Suddenly, they were under a volley of rapid fire from the guider. Some fell dead in the lorry; others ducked and opened fire. The driver speeded forward. Within a few seconds they were met with fire from the third batch and a grenade flew into the lorry thrown by Comrade Madhava Reddy, commander of the third batch, with coolness and unerring aim. More were killed and wounded. The driver was able to drive away the lorry. The police were terrified because it was the first time that they had been hit from modern weapons so successfully. It was the talk of Khammam town that about 20 special armed personnel were killed or wounded in the attack. But the guerrillas failed to halt the lorry and capture the arms.

**The running battle in Kallur forests :** The Nizam military were specially deployed here to prevent any large-scale eruption of the people's movement. They had also reports of unrest among the koya people. Apart from Razakar and local police camps in Kallur, Mulkalapalli, Gannavaram, Gumpena, six lorry loads

of the Nizam military with bren-guns were constantly patrolling the area.

The district squad at the time consisting of 70-80 persons with the best military training, good political consciousness, were all in that company. It cleared the Gannavaram and Mulkalapalli camps.

But one day it found itself surrounded near Gumpena. The different squads in the company took positions. As the Nizam forces were rushing to overwhelm them, the guerrilla commander opened fire with his guider. Other expert squad leaders like Comrades Madhava Reddy, E nukur Buchayya and others opened fire with their rifles. Eight of the enemy fell and the rest were pinned down to the ground. It was just at this moment that Comrade Madhava Reddy led the whole squad to rush to the cover behind a mound and forest, and kept the enemy pinned down. The company was saved, only one guerrilla, comrade Vasireddi Kotayya of Arekayalapadu, was killed and another wounded.

There was another clash, immediately before this, in which three Nizam army personnel were killed and a rifle was captured. But after the Gumpena experience the big company formation was disbanded, and squads of 20 were organised.

**Destruction of main roads :** Nizam's goondas, enraged at the people's resistance movement growing stronger day by day, attacked the people with greater ferocity and committed many atrocities. They used to set on fire village after village. Day and night, the military in great strength used to raid the villages and terrorise the people. Many people were thrown into the fire alive. Some were made to dig ditches and were forced to lie in them and were buried alive in the Enubamula and Errapadu camps in Suryapet taluka. With the increasing raids in the villages, enemies and the moderates began to raise their head. In some villages, they prevented the guerrillas from entering.

The local squads and guerrilla squads had nipped this enemy in the beginning itself, in many places. They dug up trenches around the villages with the idea of not allowing the military

vehicles to come into the village. They used to cut up the road between two villages, by digging it up and putting trees and big stones across it. This programme was carried out on a big scale in Suryapet taluka. Even the Trunk Road was cut up. They made breaches in the road between Tirumalgiri and Suryapet at every half furlong, between Suryapet and Khammam, Suryapet and Nayakulagudem. Many culverts were destroyed. In Suryapet, Huzurnagar and Nalgonda talukas, many squads and people, many a time, tried to destroy the bridge on the Musi river. In some places dynamite was used. Some strong bridges were destroyed (for example, one in Huzurnagar). In this destruction work, the village destruction squads along with the people and the local squads did tremendous work. Many a guerrilla squad used to stand guard on the road while this work went on. This destruction work used to go on every day wherever it was possible and it went on for months together. The enemy used to fill up the breaches made by the people during the day-time, but at night, again, the people renewed the destruction. It became the main task of the enemy to guard the roads and they did this by increasing the raids on villages. They used to shoot up anyone found on the road, in the hope of terrorising the people and preventing them from digging up the roads.

In **Jajireddygudem** (Suryapet taluka) area, the military forcibly brought people to fill up the breaches in the road and while people were doing so under the threat of bayonets, they shot dead six people and threw the bodies into those same ditches and filled them with earth afterwards. In the battle for destruction of the Jangaon-Suryapet road, 18 persons from Kasarlapadu, 18 persons from Rammanagudem, 12 from Patarlapadu and 12 from Bollanpalli, a total of 60 persons were shot dead and buried in the breaches on the road. But the guerrillas under the leadership of comrade Anireddy Rami Reddy were able to destroy a stretch of 13 miles of the road. Comrade Rami Reddy kept up the spirit of the people all through the weeks of this terrific struggle. The popular Telugu rhyme of Balamuru Kondayya "*Asunusla Thatta Para Mudu nurla Gaddapara*" (three hundred crowbars. six

hundred baskets and spades shall do the job) was put into practice.

The Nizam's police and military committed many atrocities to terrorise the people. But the people did not stop. Along with this destruction work, the squads adopted new methods to puncture the tyres of military trucks and government buses on the Trunk Road.

Near Mote village (Suryapet taluka), they fixed up big iron nails specially designed for this purpose. But that did not work. Again, on the same road, they fixed up nails on to wooden planks and laid these planks across the road. The nails were very small and so these planks also did not give any good effect. So later on they fixed up 6-inch-long nails with half an inch thickness on both sides of the planks slantwise and put them in the centre of the road. With this many lorries and buses coming from both directions had their tyres blown up. The drivers of those vehicles used to be mortally afraid to get down and fix the tyres on the spot.

At last the enemy put up innumerable camps to increase the intensity of the raids on the villages. There were camps at a distance of every four to five miles and at places even at two to three miles. Military from three or four camps used to collectively raid all the villages in that area and search all around the places upto eight to ten miles. Like this, one day in one area, the next day in another area, they used to concentrate their attention on raids and searches. These camps used to be put up in desh mukhs' bungalows. Seeing this in many places, the people and local squads pulled down the landlords' bungalows. In some places, they pulled down the parapet walls on top of the houses, so that the enemy could not take cover there and open fire on the people. This programme of destruction of bungalows was carried out very successfully. All village people used to take part in this. This was carried on with extra vigour in Suryapet taluka. And so, in many places where the enemy wanted to put up camps, it could not do so as there were no bungalows left for that purpose. After the squads started surrounding and attacking the camps,

the number of camps also decreased. There were a lesser number of camps but with more men in them. In Nalgonda taluka, miles of trenches were dug by the people, linking one sheltered contour with another, so that the guerrillas could move unobserved and avoid being pursued by the mounted cavalry of the Nizam.

But the Nizam's forces intensified their brutal terror more and more.

In Patarlapadu village (Suryapet taluka), twenty young men (local volunteers and villagers) were made to stand in a line with their hands tied and were shot dead. Two of them were alive when they were covered with grass and dried leaves and burnt alive.

In Chandupatla village, which is about one and a half miles away from Errapadu (Suryapet taluka), 12 local squad members, big, hefty and strong men, were also tied up in the same way and shot dead.

In Kotamarti village (Bhongir taluka), the enemy herded all the villagers including women, took them to the end of the village and stripping them of their clothes, beat them up terribly. They made them stand on thorns spread on the ground and covered them on all sides with branches of trees and set fire to them. The enemy were standing with sticks and rifles in their hands and were asking the people to sing the song written about Gaddapu Amin (a bearded sub-inspector of police notorious for his cruelty). The sufferings of the people, with thorns under their feet and fire all round were indescribable.

A peasant, Ramachandra Reddy, from Ippagudem who had come to Ganapuram (Warangal taluka) had his body pierced all over with spears. They left him thinking that he was dead.

In Dharmapuram tanda (Jangaon taluka), three lambadis were made to collect firewood and set fire to it, and then they were thrown into that fire alive.

In Akkarajupalle, 22 people were speared all over and then cut into pieces and killed.

In Kodakondla (Jangaon taluka), they raided the place in succession and killed 30 people. This took place under the leadership of Baburao, son of the Visnur Deshmukh.



## **Destruction of Camps**

With the increase in enemy raids, the squads and people took up the programme of destruction of camps to arrest these raids and put the enemy on the run.

**Attack on Atmakur Camp :** There was a military camp in Atmakur village (Suryapet taluka) with 50 men in it. To the north and south of this place in the nearby Epuru and Enubamula villages, there were big camps. To attack the Atmakur camp, 100 guerrillas and local squad members and 600 people gathered near the village at midnight. With the help of village informers and goondas the enemy had forcibly made the people there keep watch all round. It was not possible for the squads to surround and attack the camp if those on watch gave the alarm and the enemy came out on the roads. On top of this, the enemy would have the upper hand and the squads would have had to take shelter in self-defence. So, according to the information received by them earlier, they planned out the raid. Some squad members without being seen by the sentries on watch, climbed the walls from one side of the village and entered it. Surrounding the camp, they shot dead the sentry on duty and simultaneously opened fire at others. At the first shot from the guerrillas, the other members and people wiped out the sentries on watch all round the village and entered it. They kept armed watch to prevent help to the enemy coming from nearby big camps. The enemy hearing the shots quickly went inside the camp house, locked themselves in and started continuously firing through the windows.

While getting into the house, two men died, hit by the squad's bullets. But afterwards, the squad's fire could not reach the enemy. The squads had surrounded the house, and finding that they were not able to smoke out the enemy, decided to throw hand grenades through the windows. But just then one comrade in great excitement, in his eagerness to hit the enemy through the windows, went running along the wall across the windows. He was hit by an enemy's bullet in the neck and fell dead on the spot. It was morning by then. The squads carefully brought out the dead body. They tried hard to throw the grenades but due to

the alertness of the enemy, could not succeed. At the slightest sound near the windows, they used to fire. The guerrillas tried till 10 in the morning and then called off the attack.

**Attack on Errapadu Camp :** This attack took place after great preparations. Jannareddy Pratap Reddy's house was like a big fortress and a camp was put up in that house. People and the squads were anxious to destroy that camp. They thought of blowing up the whole fort. So armed with crowbars and pickaxes, about 2,000 people went there at midnight. They approached the house and kept sentries on all sides of the house and roads from where the enemy was likely to get reinforcements.

They had brought three country cannons (*jhajjayi*) which they set up on carts and tied up with ropes and chains, fixing them in proper positions facing the houses, and fired one of them. The cannon went off with a loud bang which shook the surrounding area but the shot went astray without hitting the wall of the fort. The cart got broken for the reason that at the time of firing the shot, no effort was made to see that the cart did not move. With this experience, the squads tied up the other cannons with more ropes and chains to a banyan tree and fired them. These shots could only shake the walls but did not even make a hole. Everyone was disappointed at this failure. (From that day, it was called the cannon plan. It had become a common place to call a well prepared plan which turns out unsuccessful or one which appears to be impossible, a *jhajjayi* plan).

But in spite of all this, the attack was not given up. People started digging with their crowbars and pickaxes at the places where the cannon shot had hit the wall. Even the crowbars bent against the strong wall, but the people went on with their work. On one side, there was a chance of a gap being formed in the wall. The enemy who were stunned and confused with the cannon shots had recovered by now and some of them had got up with arms on the battlement and were looking all over, when one of the squad members shot two of them with his rifle before they could get down. One of the squad leaders got the cannon cart near the wall, and from that cart threw a hand bomb at the enemy

group inside the wall. People all round the cart were carrying on digging work. The squad leader did not think it necessary to ask the people near him to move away. He just threw the bomb at the enemy which unfortunately hit the top of the wall and fell back on the people and local squad members near the wall. Two died on the spot and 12 were wounded very severely. That happened as day was dawning. With this, the attack was called off. All of them taking the dead and wounded, retreated to a safe place four miles away. Two of the wounded died while being treated. The rest were sent to a safer place about 30 miles away under armed protection and with proper arrangements, in spite of the military camps in the surrounding areas. (This fortress was later razed to the ground by the people, as the news of the Indian Army marching into the State was received.)

**Destruction of Kodakandla Camp :** Kodakandla is a village in Jangaon taluka, on the border of Suryapet taluka. It was a big Razakar military centre. The Suryapet taluka squads decided to destroy the centre. At dead of night, in great numbers they surrounded the village. At dawn the fight began. The enemy was firing back taking the cover of walls and was not allowing the squads to enter the village. Remembering the Kotapadu experience, the squads set fire to the Razakar's houses to smoke them out. The enemy gave up the battle front and retreated. The squads entered the village. But the enemy taking cover behind house after house, were resisting. The squads pressed ahead towards the camp, destroying the enemy route.

The guerrillas divided into small groups of four each and went ahead, at places entering the houses and finishing off the enemy. Those houses which they could not enter were set on fire with the enemy inside. They killed all men who fell into their hands. Guerrillas appealed to women to clear out and not a single woman got hurt. Fighting at every step, and at every house, the squads reached the camp and surrounded it. There, also, a fierce battle took place with the military. At last, the building was set on fire and destroyed. This great battle went on till the evening. The enemy suffered innumerable losses. The squads found 15 corpses which the enemy could not take with them while running

away. Upto 50 wounded were counted by the people. Fifteen .303 rifles, one sten-gun, many muzzle-loaders and spears were caught. The squads came out victorious without any losses. They had shown their courage, bravery and fighting skill.

**Attack on Mushtyalapalli Camp :** The squads went to attack the Mushtyalapalli camp (Bhongir taluka). But it was dawn by the time they reached the village. The enemy found them and started firing on the squads, who were approaching from three sides and halted them. The enemy had taken shelter behind the houses on the fringe of the village. They had set up guns on the walls and fired at the guerrillas. It was then daybreak. The squads had to take cover in self-defence. But they did not turn back. They fought on from behind ditches, canal bunds, etc. One of the squad members, unseen by the enemy, moved on to one side and fired shots at the enemy gunner who fell dead and the gun was silenced. The squad rushed forward firing furiously at the enemy. Four more of the enemy were downed. The squads set fire to the houses where the enemy was taking cover and forced them to retreat to their camp, which was a big bungalow.

The lorries in front of the bungalow were set on fire. But the squads could not enter the bungalow. Fighting till 7 in the evening, the squads turned back. In their discussion, after this incident, they came to the conclusion that the failure in this attack was due to lack of proper planning, the fact that they had reached the village at daybreak. That squads with small numbers attacked a big enemy camp with 150 members in it, killed 5 of them and damaged one of their guns, shows the low morale of the enemy and the high pitch of people's guerillas' courage.

The attempts to surround and destroy the camps were made on a big scale. In many cases, the people were not successful, but there were many other successes and gains. The number of camps decreased, in the other camps the number of enemy personnel was increased. But the lesser the number of camps, the raids suffered by each village became less and less frequent.

The military and police used to be frightened all the time. Even while on raids, they used to be mortally afraid. People

used to immediately destroy the camp buildings vacated by the military. Their only desire was not to leave any living space to the enemy. The camps used to be only in big bungalows. The guerrilla squads were helping the people, fighting the enemy and protecting the villagers. The raids from these big camps on villages became fewer and fewer, and the time in which the raids could be carried out on the villages during daytime became less and less. Thus they liberated villages from the enemy's grip. The conditions of people in 3,000 villages which were thus liberated improved. They successfully carried out the political and economic tasks urgently needed.

We end this chapter with narration of the martyrdom of a few leading cadre, whose life and death reveal a specific characteristic feature of the Telangana people's struggle at this stage, but which could not be covered in the narration above.

### **The Story of Martyrs**

**Martyrdom of Comrade Prabhakar Rao** and Karimnagar leaders. Comrade A. Prabhakar Rao belonged to Polampalli village (Karimnagar taluka). He took a squad of 30 members and came to Mandapuram village in Huzurabad taluka. They cut up the date and palm trees. They burnt the patels' and patwaris records and "debt and promissory" records of the deshmukhs in the villages. He carried out this party programme in many villages and came back to Mandapuram with his squad. The villagers made arrangements for their food. When they were having their food, the reserve police came to that place on information sent by the village patel earlier, surrounded the village on three sides leaving the way to the hillocks open, and concealed some of their men there with the idea that when the squad tried to escape that way to the hillocks, they could be wiped out. The police dared not confront comrade Prabhakar Rao's squad face to face, as it was a terror to the police. In many places they had suffered heavy losses inflicted by this squad. The police who were hiding, opened fire on the guerrillas as they tried to reach the safety of the hillocks. Those who had surrounded the village also chased them firing all the while. The squad was encircled. But even

then the squad returning the fire, ran towards the hillocks. Prabhakar Rao with great courage faced the police. The leader's courage enthused the other members and gave them much confidence. They fought back hard. The police who were following them could not advance. A majority of the squad members could get to the hillocks safely. The squad leader, Comrade PRABHAKAR RAO, knocked down a policeman and killed him. But at the same time, a bullet from another policeman's rifle hit him in the stomach. Still he fought on till his last breath. Another, Comrade Bhupati Reddy of Sirsilla, also like Prabhakar Rao knocked down another policeman and killed him, but he too died a hero's death. Another comrade, Damodar Reddy, from Nalgonda district, who was also an important squad leader, then with that squad, also died in this fight. Comrade Prabhakar Rao, Bhupati Reddy, Damodar Reddy and their followers, who were working for the people day and night, and were fighting the enemy in Karimnagar district, had laid down their lives and become immortal. The district lost leaders in that fight from which it never fully recovered.

### **Martyrdom of Renigunta Rami Reddy of Bhongir and of His Squad**

Martyr Renigunta Rami Reddy was an influential progressive landowner of Renigunta village of Bhongir taluka, Nalgonda district. He was active in the Andhra Mahasabha. He became naturally the leader of the village. When the Razakar's and Nizam's armed police started their arson, loot and rape in the Telangana villages, he organised his village youth into a defence squad. He trained them to handle *bharmars* (muzzle-loaders) and shot guns. A number of times, he drove away the marauding Razakars not only from his village, but from all neighbouring villages. His village, as many of the villages of old Telangana, had ramparts from where watch used to be kept for the approaching enemy. They were also defence posts without destroying which, no enemy could dare enter the village to loot or harass. Rami Reddy made it into an impregnable fort.

The Nizam's armed police force and Razakars in large numbers raided the village. Rami Reddy and his squad of 20 put

up a stout defence. The resistance continued for hours. A number of Razakars, goondas and the Nizam's police were killed and wounded. But the enemy pressed on with the attack. Suddenly, the tehsildar of Kolanupaka, who had climbed up a nearby tree, and was looking for Rami Reddy as his special target, got an opportunity and rained bullets into him. The beloved brave leader of the people, Rami Reddy, was no more there to direct and inspire the squad. The ammunition was also coming to an end. The squad tried to get off the rampart and retreat but was surrounded and almost all of them were butchered to death by the cruel enemy.

But the heroic battle and the glorious death of Rami Reddy and the glorious sacrifice of his squad became an immortal saga for fighting Telangana—one of the most powerful ballads of battle was in his name, and it became a ringing household song, a battle song throughout Telangana.

### **Courageous Comrade Gopal Reddy's Heroic Fight**

Knowing that Comrade Gopal Reddy's squad was in village Patarlapadu (Suryapet taluka), 100 military with 200 Razakars raided the village and surrounded it.

Squad leader Gopal Reddy aimed his rifle at the approaching enemy and fired. Two of them died immediately. The rest of them lay flat on the ground and threw a shower of bullets on the squad. Gopal Reddy advised his comrades that though they were surrounded, they must try to get out of that encirclement, but under no circumstances should anyone lay down their weapons and surrender to the enemy. He himself attacked the enemy line, firing at those lying flat and did not allow them to raise their heads. His squad members also followed him courageously in the same way. But the enemy fired with sub-machine-guns, hundreds of shots from all sides and due to that the whole squad could not come out safely.

Gopal Reddy who was leading them got hit in the stomach. But in spite of that, he kept firing till his last bullet had been used. Some more shots hit him in the neck and chest and he breathed his last. Four other members of the squad also died in this fight. Of these, two had got out of the encirclement and were helping the others to get out safely, by taking the enemy's

fire on themselves and not allowing them to fire at the other members. And due to this great courage of the squad leader and four other members, the squad of 15 which could have been wiped out, was able to save ten of its members. Six of the enemy also died in this fight.

The courage of the squad and its leader surprised even the enemy. The fact that the enemy, though in a big number, could not capture even one single guerrilla alive, the squad leader's heroic battle even after his intestines had come out on being hit by enemy bullets, and ten squad members getting out of that encirclement safely had become a story for people's ballad and venerable worship.

All squads and people bowed down with grief at the death of these five comrades, took them as models of courage and heroism and pledged themselves to fight the enemy till victory.

Comrade Gopal Reddy was born in a poor peasant family in Atmakur village (Suryapet taluka). He had studied in the middle school but after that in spite of his wish to study further was unable to do so due to his poverty, and was working on the land. In 1946, at the age of 20, he joined the movement against the Nizam and came into the Party to serve the people. He was the village volunteer, village leader; and had risen to the height of a central organiser and central guerrilla commander.

Many a time, he had fought the enemy in Atmakur, Enubamula, and other camps. The squad used to be present wherever the enemy was raiding, made lightning raids on the camps. They never returned without killing one or two of the enemy men. The enemy never slept soundly without fear in the camps. Sometimes, the enemy used to fire their rifles all night just because of reports that the squad was somewhere near. Gopal Reddy was a terror to the enemy. Even now the people sing of his heroism in a song written by them, "Sai Sai Gopal Reddy". Many had named their boys after Gopal Reddy.

### **Immortal Hero Comrade Pasunuru Venkata Reddy**

**Comrade Pasunuru Venkata Reddy** of Nalgonda taluka had left the college in the Quit College movement of 1947, and had joined the people's struggle. There the people's movement was then at its



peak. He had gained the love of the people, who used to call him affectionately P. V. All of them with one voice used to praise his courage, strong will-power and the urge to serve the people. P.V.'s squad was a terror to the landlords and the enemies of the people. He had destroyed many an enemy and collected many weapons. The police had concentrated their attention on destroying his squad. The military on horses was chasing him. When he was alone in Annaram village, the military, on the basis of information given by an informer, came there and killed Comrade P.V. and another comrade, Musuku Venkat Reddy.

### **Heroic Death of Comrade Ganugupati Narayana Reddy**

**Comrade Ganugupati Narayana Reddy**, who was the area (prantiya) organiser, was carrying out the programme of the Party while fighting the enemy at every step. One day, in Solipuram village (Jangaon taluka), he was in the fields distributing the land and solving the problems that had cropped up. That was an open space without any protection and it was mid-day. The enemy was raiding the surrounding area in jeeps and came to that village. They concentrated their attention on Narayana Reddy who could be easily distinguished from the others. That comrade, even though unarmed, did not surrender to the enemy. He ran in a zig zag way so as not to get into the line of the jeep and the bullets. While near the lambadi tanda at Kootigada, the enemy saw that he was tired and could not run properly. So the enemy drove the jeep straight on him and shot him with vengeance. Another comrade of Akunur, Vadla Rajayya, who was with him was also shot dead. The enemy took this as a great victory for themselves. The people were in great grief and boiling with anger, pledged to take revenge on the enemy.

Comrade Narayana Reddy was born in a peasant family in Ganugupadu village (Jangaon taluka). He had studied upto intermediate, and had worked as a headmaster in middle schools in Jangaon and Medak and had helped the student's movement. In 1947, he gave up his job during the non-cooperation movement and built up the movement in villages. In Khanapuram village, he has fought the police and snatched their weapons. He had

many victories to his record. Even the name of this strong hefty comrade was a terror to the enemy. He used to solve the people's problems with great patience and had distributed thousands of acres of land belonging to the landlords and the Government, to the people. He had become the beloved leader of the people.

Kandada Balireddy's (Lakshmidavigudem) squad and Kodandarama Reddy squad raided the notorious Razakar camps at Gundrampalli in January 1948. The enemy in this camp had murdered a large number of peasants in villages all around. In the raid 10 Razakars were killed. This gave tremendous confidence to the people of the whole area. The camp was liquidated.

After a few weeks, Kandada Balireddy's squad was betrayed by a disgruntled villager who had been reprimanded earlier by Balireddy for some misbehaviour. Two lorry loads of Razakars and armed police surrounded the squad at night in Lakshmidavigudem and captured 12 members of the squad, including Balireddy, Chakali Rajayya and Gowada Venkayya of Raghavapuram and shot them dead.

A few days after the Gundrampalli camp was raided, the Razakar leader who escaped and Pasam Pullareddi, a notorious landlord of Kaparti, attacked Aregudem, a nearby hamlet, and shot dead four peasants on the plea that they gave food to the guerrillas.

In Bollepalli village, 6 farm-servants (names not available), Ravi Raghava Reddy and his minor son, who was a good singer and was organising the Bala Sangham, were shot dead by Razakars in 1947.

These were terrible blows, but the people of Bhuvanagiri (Bhongir taluka) licked their wounds, reorganised many more fighting squads and fought many a battle against the Razakars and their agents.

### **Comrade Seshagiri Rao, The Leader Of Kothagudem Mine Workers**

**Comrade Seshagiri Rao** hailed from the Andhra area. Even as a student, he was attracted to communism. He became a whole timer of the Party. Under the instructions of the Party, he had gone

to Kothagudem and started building the mine workers' union. Within a short time, he won the respect and confidence of the workers. He was forced to go underground during the Razakars' and Nizam terror regime in 1946-47. The police and their agents were always frantically searching for him. He was caught hold of by the Nizam's police but escaped from their custody while he was being taken to the district headquarters and rejoined the squads near Dornakall. But again after a few months he was going to Bhadrachallam through forest paths from his secret headquarters. On the way at Tumala Cheruvu, due to some betrayer, he and his companions were arrested and shot dead. For a long time, even the news was not allowed to leak out to the public, because the enemy was so much afraid of his popularity with the mining workers. They expected serious trouble from them !

### **Death Of Comrade Madhava Reddy**

**Comrade Madhava Reddy** came from a small landlord family of Madhira taluka. He was a college student in Hyderabad city. He quit college and joined the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party. He was daring and full of initiative. He made many trips between Khammam area from the State Party centre near the border, to Hyderabad city, carrying literature and important instructions. He became the political leader of his area. He was good with his sten-gun and rifle and a capable guerrilla squad leader.

One day, he went to Kalakata village to settle some dispute between the agriculture labourers and the rich peasants. A section of the agricultural labourers were under the influence of a missionary school teacher. This missionary school teacher was purchased by the Nizam police. On that day, this teacher planned that his followers in the name of discussions of the dispute should surround Madhava Reddy and murder him.

Comrade Madhava Reddy did not suspect any treachery. He knew them well. So he was not on his guard. His deputy did not like the way the discussions were going on and the teacher's behaviour, and cautioned Madhava Reddy to be careful. But suddenly, Madhava Reddy's sten-gun was snatched away and

he was pounced upon and knifed. The deputy and his two companions ran a few yards and threw a crude bomb at that crowd and were able to escape.

But the Party lost one of the most promising young cadres and revolutionaries.

Later, the squad was able to kill the teacher and some of the leading rowdies who were responsible for this murder and thus avenged Madhava Reddy's death. They raided a nearby Razakar camp and wiped out the whole lot to avenge the murder of Madhava Reddy.

### **Comrade Erra Satyam**

Coming from a rich peasant family of Cheemirela village of Huzurnagar taluka in Nalgonda district, **Comrade Erra Satyam** joined the Andhra Mahasabha in 1946, and caring nothing for his parents' opposition, he worked on his fields during the day and gathered all the harijan youth during the night, politically educated them, enthused them with news of struggle and organised them under the red flag. He conducted their struggles for minimum wages against the local landlords and because of this, became the bitter enemy of the landlord class.

Two hundred policemen raided his village at the invitation of the local landlords and he was arrested. But he tricked them and came out. Directly he went underground and continued his work, now not only in his village, but in all the surrounding villages.

With the starting of armed resistance, he organised a guerrilla squad and began fighting back the Razakars and police goondas of the fascist Nizam. Gradually, he developed as a general commander of all the guerrilla squads in his area. He led struggles against the well-known zamindar of Anantagiri, Deshmukh of Buddavaram and Lakkavaram Venkatareddi and distributed hundreds of acres of land and thousands of paddy to the poor. He was a Party organiser, a guerrilla leader and a mass leader, respected by one and all in about 30 villages.

One night, he and his squad were traversing fields. He felt that something had bitten him. After a few minutes, as he started

feeling giddy, he became sure that a poisonous snake must have bitten him. His colleagues tried to carry him hurriedly to the medical hide-out where anti-snake serum was also kept. Comrade Erra Satyam tore a piece of paper from his pocket note book and wrote on it, "Comrades, I am taking leave from you all for ever. Here is my gun. Do not allow it to fall into the hands of the police but use it to destroy the enemy. Adieu !!" He lost consciousness and by the time the squad, by relay marches, reached him to the medical centre, he had passed away. The Party and his colleagues dipped the Red Banner in memory of this hero, whose last thoughts, last exhortation was "destroy the enemy!"

### **Comrade Yadagiri**

**Comrade Yadagiri** was born at Chilapokunta village in Suryapet taluka, in an agricultural labour family and was working as a labourer in Jannareddi Pratap Reddy's house. Seeing the people's sufferings, he joined the village guerrillas. He had fought very heroically in the Kandagatla and Kotapadu fights. The enemy used to be frightened at the sight of him in military uniform, he being a man of strong hefty stature. After being arrested and taken to Mundrai camp in the raid on the bus and military lorry at Tirumalagiri, he was tortured horribly for days. They thrust pins under his nails, cut his flesh with blades and put chilli powder in the wounds. The military men used to sit round him, smoking cigarettes, burning him all over his body. He was hanged by the toes, beaten with sticks, boots, rifle-butts, etc. The tortures were indescribable. But in spite of all this, Comrade Yadagiri did not bend and did not give away any secrets. "I have pledged to destroy you traitors, I shall not bow down before you. Even if I died my Sangham will carry on its work and destroy you. To torture an arrested man is not a heroic deed, but give me a rifle and see where your heroism will be". This was his answer. That comrade's courage and persistence astonished the enemy. One day, the military officer made him sit in front of him and advised him to join the military as he was a

young, capable man and he would get all comforts. But the comrade abused him and spat on his face. Immediately, the officer ordered his men to tear him to pieces. They tied up his hands and feet and slowly fired at him at every limb, one after the other. Even at that moment, Comrade Yadagiri never bowed down to them but instead shouted at them that his Sangham would take revenge and destroy them ! He is immortal !

## Telangana People's Armed Liberation Struggle Against Nizam—Its Achievements \*

From the narrative so far, we see how the people of Telangana, suffering from age-old dark feudal oppression, from forced labour and illegal exactions, from a cruel and hated feudal rule, their language and culture suppressed, groaning under a cruel, corrupt and autocratic rule, groped their way slowly towards a new life. They started out for some elementary relief in their miserable life; no *vetti* (begar), no illegal exactions, no land evictions, no torturing and dishonouring; for elementary civil liberties; for education and culture and for responsible self-government. It developed under the leadership of the Communist Party and Andhra Mahasabha into a powerful armed people's struggle for land and liberation, against feudal exploitation and against the hated Nizam's rule. It spread to about 3,000 villages, to nearly one-third of the Telangana area where gram raj (village panch—people's self-government) fighting committees were established. The Nizam's officials, the hated landlords had to quit the villages, leaving the panch committees to carry on people's administration. Not only *vetti* (begar), illegal exactions, land evictions, usurious loans, torturing and dishonouring by corrupt officials and village oppressors were put an end to, waste lands and surplus lands of the landlords, to the extent of a million acres along with the necessary cattle and agricultural implements were distributed to the rural poor; fair wages for agricultural labourers were enforced and grain distributed. People used to say that for the first time in their lives, they could have two full meals a day. Regular guerrilla squads and village defence squads were organised, the Nizam police, army and the village oppressors were confined to big camps; only from there could they go on their forages during certain hours of the day. Even the enemy press had to admit that the Communists were *cheekati doralu* (kings at night) meaning

\* Taken from "Telangana People's Struggle and Its Lessons" written by P. Sundarayya.

thereby that it was the writ of the Communists that prevailed after darkness fell, while the landlords and the police ruled only during daytime.

The whole Nizam's state and his society were shaken to their roots. The movement was spreading to more and more areas, to the whole of Telangana and beyond. It was at this juncture that the Indian Government decided to intervene, to send its own army on the plea of curbing Razakar violence on the people and making the Nizam accede to the Indian Union, but also with the main declared purpose of suppressing "Communist violence".

Before we go on to review the "police action" of the Indian Government, and the course of development till the Telangana armed struggle was withdrawn, and its aftermath, let us analyse what lies behind this success of the Telangana people's great upheaval. As Sri Suravaram Pratap Reddy, the doyen of Telangana journalists, one of the leaders of the Telugu renaissance in Hyderabad state, himself, coming from a big landlord family, exclaimed in great admiration:

"What *Indrajalam* or what *Mahamāntram* (the great magic) these Communists possess, with which they have transformed the very same people who used to say 'Oh Lord! I am your slave: I prostrate before you and touch your feet,' into heroes creating great heroes from nothing; from inert mud!"

That power, that secret of the Communists was the slogan of "land to the tiller". The Communists proudly raised that burning question and stood with the expectant and fighting peasant masses and guided them to enforce it in practice ! They fought and laid down their lives along with these peasant masses!

### **"Land To The Tiller"**

This slogan had become an urgent practical reality by sheer pressure of the developing movement.

The movement started with asserting that no peasant be evicted from the lands he had been cultivating, and won significant victories, beginning with the successful safeguarding of Ailamma's crop from the Visnur Desmukh. Later it became a statewide slogan of action : "All evictions be stopped and land seized by the landlords be restored."



The peasants, whose lands were seized earlier by the deshmukhs on various flimsy grounds, such as failure to pay accumulated debts due to ever-increasing burden of usurious rates of interest, or non-payment of rents, or by sheer arbitrary evictions because the landlords wanted to grab the lands and make them their own, raised the question of restoration of these lands. From the slogan, "all evictions must be stopped", it was not a far cry to come to the conclusion, "all illegal evictions and occupations must be cancelled". The need for the unity of all the peasants whom earlier the landlords had evicted and whose land they had occupied, and those peasants who were now being evicted by the very same landlords, was an urgent practical task. So the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party without hesitation took over the slogan of the peasant masses, "restore the illegally occupied lands to the original peasants". This spread like wild fire.

This slogan gave rise to innumerable problems before the panch committees and Sangham organisers. The landlords had leased the land to some other small peasants or had sold it to them; as such it was not possible, in all cases, to restore these lands back to the original owners, as the new owners were also small peasants, though comparatively well-to-do, who were in our front fighting against the hated landlords and Nizam's rule. Even where the organisers and panch committees offered them other equally good, fertile, or even better lands owned by the same landlords, as compensation, the peasants used to say, "give these to the present occupants, but restore to me my paternal or my hereditary lands". It was with great difficulty that an acceptable solution to the two contending peasants could be found. The principle adopted was to settle it by reconciling both, but not coercing them to accept any forced solution from above. The need for unity, the pressure of public opinion, helped them to come to adjustments.

This factor of the peasant's insistence on getting back his old land was an important factor to be kept in mind. Maybe due to his property sentiment, 'it is mine', while the new land that was being offered was that of the landlord, or it might be due to his confidence that if he was in possession of his own land, it was

justified right and no one could take it away from him, while if he took the land of someone else, he felt that the equal guarantee of "rightfulness" or "certainty of permanent ownership" was not there. Further it was noted that the peasant could be moved more easily on this question of re-occupation of his own lost lands than on making him go to occupy the surplus lands of the landlords. It was also a feature after the Indian Union army intervention, when the landlords and deshmukhs were being brought back, that the peasants much more easily gave up the surplus lands they had been cultivating, but till the end fought doggedly to retain those restored lands of their own. In fact when the struggle was withdrawn, most of the land which was even then in the possessions of the peasant masses, were these "restored lands", leased lands and waste lands that had been newly cleared or occupied and cultivated by the rural poor, while a good portion of distributed surplus land was taken back by the landlords.

### **Waste Lands**

Similarly, the land-hunger of the rural poor, with land as the only source of some guaranteed employment for a considerable period in a year, made the agricultural labour and landless poor peasant occupied waste lands under the government or under the occupation of the landlords. It was, and is even now also a mark of respectability or a basis for getting credit and other facilities. Though these lands were more difficult to cultivate, and it was also difficult to raise large crops without greater inputs and irrigation facilities, still lakhs of acres were occupied. The old regulations that 10 percent of the village waste lands were to be kept for communal cattle grazing or for other communal purposes, was ignored. Similarly, cultivable land in the forest belt was also occupied.

The Government tried its best to take back these lands after the police action, but failed miserably. They tried to put up the shepherds against the harijans and the agricultural labourers, telling them that if these waste lands were allowed to be cultivated, there would not be land for their cattle or sheep to graze. But all such obstacles were overcome by the Telangana

peasant movement. The battle even now, after 20 years, to get patta rights, the ownership rights, title deeds on these lands, continues, the Government gradually conceding this demand to a larger and larger number of these cultivators.

### **Surplus Lands Of The Landlords**

But the occupation of waste lands and prevention of evictions as well as restoration of old illegally-seized lands did not satisfy the demand for land of the land-hungry rural poor.

Thus, the question of taking over the land of the landlords had become a real and practical issue before the movement. Politically, it was easy and necessary to confiscate the land of these big deshmukhs, pattadars or jagirdars and get them distributed. But to satisfy the land-hunger to some extent or other, and strengthen and consolidate the fighting mass base, it had become necessary to actively consider taking over all the surplus land.

This move began with the taking over of land over 500 acres. Politically, it was argued and accepted by the Party leadership that there were some big landlords who were with us fighting the Nizam rule. To keep that section with us, we should keep the ceiling sufficiently high. Further, it was also kept in mind that in the election pamphlet, "People's Raj in Vishalandhra", in Andhra, in 1946, the Party had given the slogan of 100 acres ceiling with adequate compensation for the land taken over.

But as the movement in Telangana developed, and the demand for land become more and more insistent, the land ceilings were reduced to 200 acres and finally, by the middle of 1948 itself, to 100 acres dry and 10 acres wet. In Telangana, it was a general feature that practically every owner had some wet and some dry land in his holding. Taking one acre wet as equivalent to 10 acres dry, the Party had ultimately hit upon this 10 acres wet and 100 acres dry land as ceiling. But when implementing it, the question was raised whether this applied to a joint family having a number of grown-up adult male members (brothers) or for a single family with minor children and dependents. It was clarified that this 10 wet and 100 dry acres should be the maximum for a family even if it was a joint one, taking into consideration the

extreme need of having enough land for distribution. But at the same time, it had to be kept in mind that we should not seize the lands of those who were likely to be in the movement. But before these explanations could be given and they could be implemented, the "police action" had intervened. Compare with these with the ceilings the Congress Government proclaimed later on.

The ceiling which the Government in Hyderabad announced was 50 acres wet or 250 acres dry. Later the Congress Government reduced this to 27 acres wet or 216 acres dry. These ceilings were far higher than what the Telangana movement sought to impose. And, of course, many loopholes were there, the Act was never implemented, and no surplus land was ever taken and distributed.

Yet the landlords were allowed to sell their surplus lands to prospective buyers. Further, protected tenants had the first option to purchase the land at lower prices. In the Telangana area, quite a large amount of land was purchased or retained by tenants. Of course, even in Telangana, by 1960, 50 percent of the protected tenants had been evicted, most of them in those districts and areas to which the Telangana movement did not spread or take deep roots.

The ceiling which the Party advocated in Andhra, in the 1946 election pamphlet, was evidently born of a reformist understanding. It did not analyse the actual class differentiation and evolve a suitable agrarian programme. In Telangana, the slogan that the Party should have popularised was that the land of the landlords who indulged in feudal exploitation, exorbitant rents, usurious interests and other illegal exaction, and who were hand-in-glove with the Nizam and jagirdars and big deshmunhs, would be confiscated. But those who would come with the anti-Nizam movement would be left enough to earn a decent living cultivating with their own family labour and employing a certain amount of wage labour. The concretisation could have been more prompt, depending on the development of the movement; the Party could have boldly implemented land distribution and the sweep of the movement could have been far wider.

It is important to note here that the taking away of the surplus land and its distribution were resorted to, when the pressure from

the fighting masses became insistent, and permission for it was obtained from the Polit Bureau, with some reluctance, during the latter part of 1947. At that time, the Party leadership was following the policy of building a front with progressive Congress sections against the narrow Vallabhbhai clique (national front) in the name of strengthening the independence achieved in August 1947.

### **Was It Right To Have Taken To Land Distribution ?**

Later, Sri Ravi Narayan Reddy and quite a number of his supporters challenged the correctness of distributing the land. Of course, all of them are now in the Right Communist Party. Their argument was that knowing full well that we could not retain the land so seized and distributed, without a people's democracy in the whole of India, as the Congress bourgeois-landlord Government would not allow such distribution, even in one state of Hyderabad, it was a premature step.

They argued further that the seizure of land and distribution had come from the wrong slogan given by the Party at that time, viz., that the Telangana movement was a liberation struggle even against Nehru and the Indian state, the Yenan of India, the beginning of the people's democratic revolution, as in China. The slogan of land seizure should be advocated only as a part of the liberation struggle programme. They argued that we should have confined ourselves to: "against evictions, for rent reductions" but not advocated revolutionary seizure of land!

It was true that our Party in Andhra at that time decided to continue the Telangana armed struggle against the Indian Government, which had sent its armies mainly to suppress the Telangana peasant movement, as a liberation struggle. Its understanding that this was the beginning of the Indian revolutionary armed struggle for people's democracy was wrong, because such a situation and correlation of forces did not exist at that time.

But the Telangana movement developed from small partial demands to partisan armed struggle to enforce these demands and later it also developed into an armed struggle to overthrow Nizam's rule itself. The gram raj committees were in fact organs

of struggle and, at the same time, organs of power. But with the Indian army's entry and merger of Hyderabad state into the Indian Union, a different state, with an entirely different correlation of class forces came into existence. So, the liberation struggle against the Nizam could not become automatically transformed into a liberation struggle against the Nehru Government of the Indian state.

Even so, the question of defending the land and other gains of the Telangana peasantry was there. So it was correct to have carried on armed resistance against the attempts of Nehru's armies to seize back lands from the peasants and give it to the landlords. Such armed resistance to defend the partial gains or enforce partial demands is partisan struggle. Such partisan struggles should not be confused with the partisan struggles carried on during the period of armed liberation struggle. Every partisan struggle is not necessarily a liberation struggle.

Our Party obtained all this clarification only when its delegation met the leadership of the international Communist movement and Comrade Stalin, towards the end of 1950 and the beginning of 1951.

But to argue, as Sri Ravi Narayan Reddy did, that land seizure and distribution during that period was wrong, is sheer bourgeois reformism and tailism.

We have seen how the Party had to take up the question of land distribution from the very real practical needs of the movement, in fact, only under the pressure of the fighting peasantry.

It was because of this correct step that we were able to inspire the Telangana people, especially the peasant masses, the backbone of the agrarian revolt, to carry on the dogged fight against the Nizam and his cruel minions, the Razakars and other armed personnel, against the brutal terror and violence that had been let loose. It was this that enabled the Party and the AMS to stay on in the field in Telangana, while the Congress and every other force was forced to flee to the Union territory.

Later, to retain these gains in land distribution, the Party correctly called upon the Telangana peasants to continue their

armed fight when the landlords who returned with the help of Nehru's army, tried to seize the peasants lands. The fight continued for three more years after the "police action", and it was this fight, in spite of heavy sacrifices, that brought about the Hyderabad Tenancy Act, the most radical piece of land legislation till then, apart from other big democratic and revolutionary gains which we have already outlined in brief.

If the Party had not confused it with a liberation struggle against the Nehru Government, it could have adopted different tactics to enforce an early negotiated settlement for partial solution of the land question and would have achieved greater successes, or at least withdrawn with lesser costs and sacrifices, keeping the Party and AMS organisation in greater cohesion.

Our Central Committee as well as the meeting of important cadres of Telangana in March 1952 categorically rejected Ravi Narayan Reddy's argument and came to the conclusion that it was correct on our part to have continued the armed defence of the land gained, and if we had not done so, the peasants would have considered us as having betrayed them. Here is what Comrade Ajoy Kumar Ghosh, the then General Secretary of the Party, said in conclusion at that meeting :

"Before I conclude my speech, I will explain my opinion about the Telangana struggle. There is a section arguing that immediately after the entry of the Congress Government armies into Telangana, the armed peasant guerrilla struggle should have been withdrawn. I consider it wrong to lay down arms immediately after the entry of the Indian Union armies. The issue that faced the Telangana peasant struggle at that time was whether the peasantry that won land and democratic rights after a bitter struggle, were to surrender them without a fight and hand over the lands to the deshmukhs and to the landlords? Or were they to continue armed peasant guerrilla resistance to the extent necessary to defend them? In my opinion, to continue the resistance is the revolutionary path and to lay down arms is the path of betrayal of the people.

"Another argument that is brought out in support of withdrawal of armed guerrilla struggle at that time is that all the

lands or a major portion of the land was seized back by the landlords and deshmukhs. Even if it was so, it is my firm opinion that on that ground to withdraw the armed peasant guerrilla struggle is not correct. If we had withdrawn the armed struggle, the peasantry would have considered that our Party leadership had betrayed them. In fact, it is in reality betrayal.

"Then what should we have done? What changes ought we to have made? It was wrong to fight with the object of establishing revolutionary people's power, for overthrowing of the Nehru Government. It should have continued as armed guerrilla struggle being waged by the peasantry, and for land to the peasantry. When the people still in general had illusions about the Nehru Government, to continue to fight with the immediate aim of overthrowing the Nehru Government would not help to mobilise the broad masses of the people. That is why we should have changed that slogan. Even if the enemy has been able to seize back all the land or a major portion of the land, the Telangana struggle has got tremendous revolutionary significance. We have learnt great lessons from the Telangana struggle.

"One very important fact it has proved or brought forth: that the Telangana peasant armed struggle has not only been able to fight the weak and demoralised Nizam's forces, but has also been able to fight the Congress Government's armed forces, well-equipped with modern weapons. The Telangana peasants fought for three years against 30,000 to 50,000 armed personnel. Even after three years, the Government has not dared to say that it has been able to suppress it. So Telangana has blasted wrong conceptions that Nehru's armies are invincible (or are so strong that it is not possible to defeat them). Thus, the Telangana peasant armed guerrilla struggle has demonstrated the strength of peasants' guerrilla struggle and their revolutionary potentialities. If the working class had joined hands with it, and in some other areas if the peasant struggles had reached the same level, we can imagine what great developments might have occurred. This is the greatest lesson of our whole revolutionary experience. These lessons we must study carefully.

"But then another question arises. When should it have been called off? I cannot just now definitely say as to exactly when it should have been withdrawn..." (Translated from Telugu.)



But, unfortunately, Comrade Ajoy Kumar Ghosh did not follow the above precept nor study the experiences of the Telangana struggle, but took to a different course of action that immensely contributed to the weakening of the movement not only in Telangana but throughout India, and put the whole Party on a totally reformist path.

The urge for land and the tenacity with which the Telangana peasants carried on this fight can be seen from the following example of the old peasant in Komatlagudem village of Huzurnagar taluka, who refused to concede that the land belonged to the landlord, and continued to maintain, "this land is mine". He was tied hand and foot and put on an ant-hill by the military and police brutes of the Nehru Government, for three days till he was eaten away by the white ants. But the old peasant never once as long as he was conscious, gave up his claim, "this land is mine".

### **Formation Of Gram Raj Committees**

In the villages, there was no Nizam Government rule during the movement. The majority of the village officers and the hated deshmukhs had run away from the villages. Some of them had begged for mercy and forgiveness from the guerrilla squads and from the people, and promising to abide by their rule had stayed on.

The village administration was carried on by the committees elected by all adults in the village. These were called "Gram Raj" Committees (panch committees).

Men, women and leaders of village squads were elected to these committees, consisting of five or seven members. The Gram Raj Committees used to solve the people's problems without the earlier prevalent evils of corruption, bribery and other dirty methods. In this work, along with the committee members, many ordinary people used to take part. All the problems were solved in a democratic way. The moderates, the right wing, who sowed confusion, and the enemy elements were given public trial and were punished according to their crimes. The Gram Raj Committees used to warn them, socially boycott them, levy fines or confiscate their properties according to the nature of their crime. Those who used to move about with the police and carry out attacks on the people were given suitable punishment.

## **Agricultural Reforms**

The agricultural reforms were carried out successfully. The lands which were confiscated by the landlords and the money-lenders, even twenty years previously, under the pretext of loans not paid, under threats, or under the pretext of taxes not paid or for some fines levied under some false "charges", were returned to the original owners.

The landlords had deprived the people of good lands and instead had given less fertile lands to them. This order was changed under the agricultural reforms. Tenants were given full rights on lands they were tiling. Landlords were not entitled to receive rent or compensation on these lands. The *kauldar's* (tenant's) land was declared to be his own. He did not have to pay anything for that land. In both these methods of land distribution, along with the agricultural labour, poor and middle peasant, the rich peasants and in some cases even small landlords who were one with the people, had also benefited.

A ceiling was fixed on land and the rest of it was distributed to agricultural labourers and poor peasants. Some of it was distributed to middle peasants also. A big discussion took place on what should be the ceiling. The first decision was that only lands above 500 acres should be distributed. After that, it came down to 100 acres dry and 10 acres wet or 20 acres of wet land. And that was the final decision. Distribution of land was done according to this.

This concerned only those landlords who were not inimical to the people. Those who were the people's enemies were deprived to the last acre of their lands. And all these were distributed to the people free. This took place in every village.

In Suryapet taluka, in 110 villages around Errapadu and Epuru, 20,000 acres of land belonging to the landlords were distributed. In all the 3,000 villages to which the movement spread, 10 lakh acres of lands, surplus lands, *anyakrantalu* (illegally seized lands), leased lands, waste lands and porombokes, forest and grazing lands, were distributed with full ownership rights to the rural poor and middle peasants. In Errapadu and Epuru areas itself, one lakh acres of Government land were distributed.

## **Distribution Of Cattle**

Along with the lands, the extra cattle belonging to the landlords were also distributed to the people. The whole cattle herds of people's enemies were completely taken over and distributed. Their number was in tens of thousands. The cattle from one area were driven to another and distributed, to prevent the enemies taking them back in case of raids.

In Epuru and Errapadu areas alone, the cattle sent to other areas and distributed amongst the people, came to more than 2,000. This will easily give one an idea as to how many cattle were distributed in the fighting areas of Telangana.

Along with the cattle, agricultural implements were also distributed to the people. They had received goats and sheep also in good numbers. All these were free of cost.

## **Cancellation Of Loan Deeds**

Loans which were given to the people by landlords, desh mukhs and money-lenders were cancelled. In every village, these loans, either in cash or grain form, ranged anywhere from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 15,000. With the cancellation of the loans, the people got rid of a big burden. In the areas surrounding Epuru and Errapadu villages, the amount of loans cancelled was about eight lakh rupees, which will give one an idea of the people's burden, and the relief they got.

## **Increase In Wages Of Agricultural Labourers**

The agricultural labourers in these villages, sometimes through strikes and demonstrations for increase in their yearly and daily wages, and by bringing pressure on the peasants through their representatives in the village committees, succeeded to a great extent in their demands. The daily wages were increased from 2 to 3 kg. of grain to 4 kg. and the monthly grain salary of farm servants from 40-60 kgs. to 80-90 kgs. and in certain cases, even 120 kgs. Noteworthy here is the fact that rich peasants, despite the tremendous gains they got from the united struggle against the Government and zamindars, and the major role the agricultural labour played to achieve these, were reluctant to increase the daily wage of the agricultural labourers. They used to give many reasons

to avoid it. The rich peasants and the capitalist landlords used to strongly resist increase in wages. That was why the strikes and demonstrations of agricultural labourers became inevitable, especially so after the "police action". And it was only after these strike-struggles or threat of strikes that real increase in their wages took place. With the land received and the increase in wages, a remarkable change came about in the political consciousness and mode of living of the agricultural labourers. People in these villages used to say that for the first time in their lives, they were having two full meals a day.

### **Other Facilities**

Under these gram rajyams, the people received many other benefits.

1) There was no government agent to collect taxes and the money remained with the people.

2) The Party and the Sangham had understood the opposition and dissatisfaction that had come over the toddy-tappers during the programme of cutting down toddy-yielding palmyra trees and date trees. So this programme was given up. On top of this, they were told to tap the toddy, give good toddy at cheap prices to the people, and not to pay any taxes to the Government. This was appreciated by the people and it brought about good results.

3) A programme of digging irrigation canals, small tanks for agricultural betterment was taken up and carried out.

4) Medical facilities and health care, and training people to observe minimum hygiene was taken up on a wide scale. Especially in villages where cholera epidemic was raging, the people were given proper help, inoculation, etc., and protected. Many villages were supplied with medicines on a large scale for prevention of diseases. It was while rendering such medical relief that Comrade Gone Venkatayya of Kotamarti village, a promising local organiser in Bhuvanagiri taluka, became a victim of cholera attack and died.

5) Peasants whose houses were burnt down during the struggle were supplied with wood, palm leaves, grass, etc., to rebuild their houses. These were taken from the palm groves of landlords and Government forests.

## **Equal Rights For Women**

In this struggle, women had participated equally along with the men and due to this, it became easier for the Gram Committees, Sangham and Party to campaign against the age-old ideas prevalent in the society that women were inferior to men. Gram Raj Committees proclaimed and campaigned that men and women had equal rights. Women were elected to Village Panch Committees. The local people used to know very well the conditions of the families or their relations with each other and so it was possible for the Gram Committees to amicably settle family disputes, bring about reconciliation between them, settle questions of compensation for running away with someone else's wife, according to the prevalent customs in certain centres; prevent unwilling marriages, i.e., girls being forced to marry persons whom they did not like, and in suitable cases, giving divorce and making the new couple lead a respectable life.

## **Abolition Of Untouchability**

Caste distinctions were deep-rooted in the villages. In the struggle against the Government all people were forced to work and fight collectively without any distinction of caste and creed and so after this, fighting the evil of untouchability became easier. In guerrilla squads, equality and mutual respect were strictly practised. And this practice changed the ideas of the people.

Belief in gods, demons, etc., had decreased to a great extent. Specially amongst the youth, it had disappeared noticeably.

## **Cultural Progress**

Political propaganda used to be carried on extensively. Right from the Gram Committees, village squads, to organisers and regular guerrilla squads, everyone used to explain every problem in mass meetings. Along with this, there used to be many cultural items, such as *Burra Katha*, *Gajlasuddulu* (shepherds' singsong) *Vuyyala Pata* (cradle songs), *Kolatapupata* (singsong dance with small wooden pieces in the hands of dancers which are used to produce rhythmic sounds) and *bhajans*. Many songs were written about every problem, about big incidents during the struggle, about the martyrs and about the atrocities of the enemy, their

defeat, etc. These were not written by learned poets but had come from the ordinary people themselves in the form of folk songs. They used to be very melodious and rousing to the masses. Even the artists were not trained ones but the people used to go about in squads giving performances. These programmes and singing of songs used to take place not at any fixed time or place, but anywhere and any time and wherever it was possible and necessary. The guerrilla squads used to exhibit their military knowledge before the people. Local squads also used to take military training every day.

All these programmes were watched by the people with great interests and enthusiasm. Sometimes, their enthusiasm used to lead them into the programme itself.

Cowherd boys used to give these cultural programmes and organise military drill also. Due to this, sometimes, serious accidents took place.

In Chilapakunta village in Suryapet taluka, these cowherd boys were once enacting a drama. One of them had become Janna Reddy Pratap Reddy, the vicious landlord and another one a notorious Razakar, Abbas Ali, and the rest of the boys were guerrillas. The actors who played the part of the landlords were badly mauled. Similar mock plays were enacted in innumerable places.

Even when the enemy raids were at a peak, the adult literacy programme was taken up and carried on. Village committees and village squads were not only learning themselves but were also teaching others. They used to learn whenever they found some time. Many illiterate persons in the squads, etc., were able to read newspapers and books after a few months. Because of the political consciousness, many were ready to learn and they did it in quite a short time. This could be done successfully because it was looked upon as a political task.

These tasks were carried out by the village committees according to the principles and instructions laid down by the higher committees. The village squads used to give their full support to this. And the organiser and the guerrilla squad used to be always ready to help all of them.

The guerrilla being always ready to resist and fight the enemy, the land cultivation in the villages went on undisturbed. They hid their grains and money in the grain pits scattered all over the fields

to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy. There was no fear of thieves. Even if small thefts took place, the village committees and guerrilla squads used to look into the matter and return the stolen articles to the owners.

### **Trade With Towns**

Village committees had to make arrangements to carry on trade with towns and regular supplies of essential goods and supplies were brought from the towns and the produce of the peasants were disposed of in the towns. Because the towns were the centres of enemy concentration, a certain amount of bribing and understanding with the Nizam's officials had to be arrived at by the village traders or their counterparts in the towns. Further Gram Raj Committees could not clamp too many restrictions and start suspecting these traders or interfering with their trade as possible enemy agents.

It was through this trade that some essential raw material for making gunpowder or even crude bombs could be gathered.

Once, when currency shortage threatened to block this trade, ideas of barter exchange came to the forefront.

But the contact and normal trade with towns had not been very much interrupted, mainly because the enemy did not feel it necessary to blockade them and prevent trade. The difficulties that arose were mainly due to the fear of loot, insecurity from the Razakars and the corrupt Nizam's police, and their propensities to make illegal gains. Further, there was the short supply of goods in the cities and towns themselves due to the general conditions of insecurity.

In the villages, Gram Raj Committees through their local squads, kept small crime under effective control. The whole attitude of the people to such crimes kept the usual criminal in check. Some anti-social elements indulging in such activities were caught by the people and the squads and were duly dealt with.

### **The Military Aspect Of The Struggle**

The most satisfactory and inspiring aspect of this activity was the discipline and devotion of the village squads and the greater degree of these qualities in the regular squads. But for this, the movement could not have reached the sweep it did during its anti-Nizam liberation phase, nor could it have sustained the tremendous

losses, in both the phases, and especially the shattering losses it suffered during the Indian military terror regime of 1948-51. This discipline and devotion had become possible because they were closely linked with the people's movements. These squads came mainly from the toiling sections, they were fighting for the removal of their grievances and sufferings, which meant they were fighting for getting rid of their own and their families accursed conditions of living. Naturally, the people helped them in all ways, billeted them in their homes, or fields or in huts at their irrigation wells scattered all over the fields, comparatively safe shelters, dispersed far away from the villages, when the villages become the concentrated targets of the ravaging hordes of Razakars and Nizam's armed police, and later of the Indian Government's police, armed personnel and landlord goondas and Home-Guards. The people loved the guerrillas and respected them and praised them. The guerrillas felt they were one with the people and they must do everything to help the people and not harm them or harass them and, if necessary, lay down their lives for the cause of the people.

This is the secret of that amazing discipline, devotion and capacity to bear such great hardships and the readiness to make sacrifices.

During this whole period of five years, in thousands of actions and raids on the house of the landlords or their agents, there were practically no complaints, or surprisingly few complaints of misdeeds on the part of the guerrillas. Every bit of property supplies, articles, jewellery or cash confiscated from the enemies houses were meticulously accounted for, and forwarded to the higher committees! Rarely had any action against any enemy or his agent been taken without proper direction from the local committee or organiser's direction and decision. The squad commanders implicitly obeyed the political organisers' instructions and directives.

There was no laying hands on women or molestation of women, no maltreatment of old men even belonging to the enemy. Generally, the instructions were: do not hurt women or children even when the guerrillas are taking action against the enemy. If



Certain action had been taken against women in certain cases, it was because these women rushed against the guerrillas endangering not only their action but their safety itself. There might have been some rare cases of reprisals against women as a check to the most cruel officer's or landlord's mentality. But such cases were promptly criticised by the higher committees or senior comrades as harmful to the movement and severe warnings were given not to repeat such incidents.

To illustrate the discipline and *corps d'esprit*, the following two examples are enough. I give them from my own experience.

### **Guerrilla Member And Toddy**

We were on the way to the Krishna River forest areas to reach our political headquarters of that region in July 1951. We had to cross over a hundred miles of plain area before we could reach the safety of the forest. The police and Home Guards had infested this whole route and area. The squads could march only during nights. They avoided every inhabited point on the way, and walked across the fields and stony wastes, so as not to leave any trace of their movements. After nearly three years of starvation and suffering, it was amazing to see the capacity of the squads to march practically the whole night covering distances of 20 to 30 miles carrying rations, supplies of arms, etc., weighing about 15-20 kg.

Suddenly, I noticed a squad member lagging and with great difficulty keeping pace with the marching squad. The squad leader told me that he had developed sudden heat and was passing urine red in colour. Our water stock was over. We had to go quite a distance before we could reach water. If that squad member could only be permitted to drink a pot or two of toddy, which was readily available as we were passing through date and palmgroves, he would be alright within a shortwhile. I exclaimed, why not? The squad leader replied, "The orders are that no guerrilla should drink toddy. Disobedience of this order would entail serious punishment." As such, only the "area leadership or you, as an important comrade from the State Centre, can give the necessary permission." I already gave it, assuring him that I would explain the matter to the area committee. That was the

magnitude of personal discipline, especially if we remember that drinking toddy is quite a common habit among poorer sections in the Telangana area.

The area committee leadership told me how just a few weeks before, all their supplies were cut off for nearly two months by military and armed police, sealing off all forest routes to the villages. The squads had to be content with rationed bajra (small millet) gruel (1/4 litre) twice a day, for days, even without salt. The squads were hungry and becoming weak. Yet, the sentry used to take up his position half a mile away across bunds and boulders and hillocks in these mountains. It was with great difficulty that this essential task was being adhered to. Sometimes, one or the other squad member fainted due to exhaustion, yet the comrade-in-charge of the kitchen used to keep the sentry's share of the ration, hot and ready meticulously! A hungry man in charge of tempting gruel awaiting the man on duty!

### **Story Of Comrade Mudireddi Venkatachalam : "Only Telangana Guerrillas Can Dare Do It!"**

Comrade Mudireddi Venkatachalam came from a middle peasant family of Repalle taluka, Guntur district. He used to work in the fields and graze cattle in the islands of the Krishna river. He was accustomed to swim in the Krishna even when it was in floods. He was attracted to the Communist movement in that area quite early. When the Congress regime let loose brutal raids and terror in Andhra in 1948-49, and murderous assaults on the Party cadre were started, the Party gave the call to retaliate in defence. When it became too difficult to stay there in face of police terror they were asked to retreat to the forest areas and join the fighting Telangana guerilla squads. He was one of them.

One day, in July 1951, in the Devarkonda hills, near the Krishna river, I was talking with the area leader. A hundred yards away, I saw a normally clad young man having serious and prolonged discussions with two lambadi youngmen. After an hour or so, they left the place. That evening, our area leader came to me downcast and broke the news that Comrade Subbayya (his assumed name) was washed away in the Krishna river, and *narrated the tale.*

Comrade Venkatachalam was entrusted with the job of crossing the Krishna and contacting a guerilla squad on the other side and escorting it back to safety to Telangana, from the dangerous situation in which it was pressed in the Andhra area. The two lambadis were the expert swimmers to help him cross the Krishna river. But, unfortunately, on the day scheduled for them to cross the Krishna it was suddenly in high floods. The expert lambadi swimmers advised against crossing the Krishna at that hill spot, and either to wait for a few days, till the floods subsided; or go downstream 50 miles, and cross it there from the plains and walk back on the other side of the river to the rendezvous with the squad-in-danger. This was impossible; they would certainly fail to keep the appointment and the squad would be in great peril of being annihilated by the closing in of the enemy. He appealed to the lambadi swimmers not to fail the Party, but be prepared to risk their lives to carry out its command, and save the lives of the 10-member squad. The lambadi comrades gave up their objections when the Party was mentioned.

All three took hold of dried logs and jumped into the roaring Krishna. Comrade Venkatachalam was swept into the mid-current while the other two were buffeted back to the bank. They again and again tried to reach Venkatachalam but failed. They saw Venkatachalam being dragged down under the water by the swift current but he was gallantly coming up with a firm hold on his log of wood. They sorrowfully followed him from the bank and when they lost sight of him, they returned to convey the sad news! It was just a little distance above the present Nagarjunasagar Dam.

We were all aghast! To have lost such a comrade? Was it right for us to have allowed him to attempt crossing the Krishna risking the lives of three comrades? Should we have given up the rescue operation and risked the lives of a whole squad? That problem was not referred either to the area leadership or to me for answer or for direction! Comrade Venkatachalam and those two devoted lambadi party members solved it themselves!

What a joy when four days later, in the evening, we saw Comrade Venkatachalam. Leading the squad he came and saluted us! We embraced him, plied questions about all that happened.

He said, "Nothing extraordinary, Comrades. I did not lose heart, stuck to my log of wood and reached the other bank. The shepherds there helped me and guided me to the rendezvous. After the floods subsided, we crossed the Krishna. The whole squad is here safe and sound."

But the leader of that squad interrupted him and narrated the story as he had heard it from the shepherds. Comrade Venkatachalam was desperately swimming. He was approaching a small water cataract and whirlpool. The shepherds shouted urging him to the last desperate attempt, threw their tied-up cloth rope and long bamboo for him to catch.

If he was dragged down the cataract, certain death! Comrade Venkatachalam swam; caught hold of the bamboo and reached the bank and was saved.

He was trying to explain to them but they cut him short. "Comrade, you need not. We know who you are! You are a Telangana Communist guerrilla. Only a Telangana guerrilla can dare attempt crossing the Krishna in these high floods. Take rest tonight here." Comrade Venkatachalam refused and explained the job on hand. They marched the whole night, reached the rendezvous as scheduled and contacted the squad.

We were all happy! When the Telangana struggle was withdrawn on October 21, 1951, and in spite of the promises, no amnesty was declared, Comrade Venkatachalam was explaining to a village gathering the necessity of voting for the Communist candidate (PDF). The police suddenly surrounded it and shot Venkatachalam dead.

Such was the devotion and sacrifice of the great Telangana fighters, inspiring generations to come and illumining their path for a successful people's revolution, for a new society!

### **Weaknesses**

There were lapses! A number of times, the sentries posted not in the mountainous areas but actually in the plains, during the anti-Nizam struggle and during the first few weeks after the Indian army intervention, failed to be alert at their post and as a result, guerilla forces had to suffer tremendous losses. This could have

been avoided, if only more training for this especially important task, more political consciousness and more awareness of this duty had been imparted.

The biggest weakness, from the military aspect, was lack of any kind of military training : knowledge of use of fire-arms, its manufacture or its repair was so dismally poor that even great enthusiasm and sacrifice could not overcome it. Elementary lack of military tactics, for planning attacks or retreat, was so glaring that we failed to coordinate small guerilla squads' actions against the enemy. Prolonged hour-long pitched actions against the enemy and their camps, with great numbers of enthusiastic but disorganised masses, used to take place. Hence we suffered serious losses or were forced to retreat in face of determined defence of the enemy, or be on continuous run before the military raids. We could not combine and develop small-scale guerilla actions of harassing the enemy, into sufficiently large-scale operations to drive out the enemy from their scattered posts and clear the enemy from the larger and larger areas.

Nor were we able to capture any worthwhile number of modern weapons from the enemy by destroying them, till the Indian military intervention. Then the Razakar and the Nizam's armed forces were in panic and on the run which enabled our squads, helped by the mass upsurge, to seize quite an impressive number from panic-stricken and fleeing Razakars and from their camps. But, by then, we had to contend against the well-trained and disciplined Indian army, in an entirely different political situation, which had become more unfavourable to us!

If only we had some kind of military training, a minimum supply of modern weapons, our movement in Telangana could have been far more widespread; perhaps the whole Telangana would have been capable of fighting military in bigger numbers, company or battalion level; could have been in a far better position to meet the onslaught of the Indian army and, perhaps, given correct political strategy (of treating, in that phase, the Telangana armed struggle as peasants' partial struggle for land and not liberation struggle against the Nehru Government), could

have won and retained great successes on the anti-landlord agrarian front! Leave alone the prospects of sections of the army or police revolting and joining the fighting peasantry!

It is a wonder that in spite of the miserable weakness in this respect, the spontaneous rising of the people and these squads springing from them on the spur of the movement, with whatever little guidance which the Communist Party could give them at that time, could achieve such great success, shake up the Nizam rule and keep the Indian army and Government at bay for such a long time ! It was like the Paris Communards "storming the heavens!" But unfortunately we could not draw the proper lessons from this Telangana struggle even for developing the future revolutionary movement.

### **Working class And Urban Centres Not In Action**

One of the biggest drawbacks during the whole of the Telangana movement was the weakness of the democratic movement in the cities and towns in Hyderabad state. There was very little industrial development in these cities, as such the working class was very small. Whatever existed, there was little organised working class movement, and in what was there our Party was even weaker. There was little growth of the intelligentsia, and a good portion of whatever existed were from the big feudal or other landlord families. They were pro-Nizam. With autocratic feudal rule, and the whole administrative and police and military service dominated by Muslim recruits and persistent suppression of every liberal democratic expression, it was nothing strange that the democratic movement did not grow in the cities. Whatever radical student movement was there, also became quiet after the militant students left the cities to join the fighting peasantry.

When the post-war mass upsurge started in Hyderabad, the cities and town lagged far behind. The enemy made them his base for military and police operations. They had become strong fortresses and bases for the hated landlords and their agents who had been driven out from the villages. It became difficult to develop the democratic or working class movements during this period in these cities.

There were no solidarity struggles in support of the fighting Telangana peasantry! No big demonstrations, no hartals, no general strikes, not even sabotage actions, nor reprisals on the enemy: not even counter-intelligence on the enemy moves.

It became difficult to carry on the struggle in the rural areas, with practically no support or action from the cities. To procure essential supplies, even medicines, became a serious problem. They had to be got from big cities and towns from the Indian Union territory.

Whatever little contacts we had, rendered yeoman service to the Telangana movement. They helped us to organise houses, places for a number of underground offices from where we could keep some contact with neighbouring fighting regions. Some supplies and some arms also could be procured. But we had to do it at great financial expenditure and also our underground centres were blown up repeatedly. Valuable cadres were arrested, tortured and some shot!

Even this help and support helped us considerably in the fight. If this also had not been there, it is easy to imagine how much more our Telangana movement would have been hamstrung!

The Telangana movement was essentially a peasant partisan movement. It could not be developed into a real united worker-peasant onslaught on the enemy! The weakness of the democratic movement, and especially the revolutionary working class movement and the Communist Party in the cities persisted. But during that time the impact of the huge Telangana upsurge upon the toiling masses and middle-classes was there, and their sympathies were with that struggle!

### **No All-India Solidarity Action**

By the time the Telangana peasant movement assumed its armed partisan character and later a liberation character against Nizam's rule, the post-war upsurge in the rest of India had been more or less successfully contained by the ruling classes. Political power was transferred by the imperialists to the Indian bourgeois-landlord classes. India had become independent. The Congress leadership was able to integrate the states into the Indian Union by promising privy purses and privileges to the princes, and by

rousing the hopes of alleviation of grievances and of a new era to the states' people. Effectively the states' people's struggle were halted. By striking at the Communist movement in its strongholds, Kerala, Andhra and Bengal, it tried to hamstring whatever possibilities of developing the revolutionary movement were there and of rousing the rest of the country to emulate it.

In that situation, the sectarian policies followed by our Party had further isolated it from the people. As such, no real solidarity actions in support of the Telangana movement could be organised. And by the time the Indian army intervened in Hyderabad state, it was left to fight on its own. Only in the Andhra part of the Madras state, the Party and the people had become the rear of the Telangana struggle. Here the Congress Government launched a ferocious attack to liquidate it; the first attack in the first half of 1947 and the second attack beginning from January 1948 and lasting till the middle of 1951; and from the beginning of October 1949, they carried out physical annihilation, calculated murder, of about 300 Communist leaders and cadres after arresting them.

The story of Telangana cannot be complete without at least briefly going over the struggle of the Party and the democratic movement in the Andhra rear, nor proper lessons for the development of the revolutionary movement even in the future be drawn.

Here is a brief outline of the movement in Andhra area.



## **The Communist Movement In Andhra : Terror Regime — 1948-51\***

### **Historical Background**

Andhra is a contiguous area to Telangana. Now in 1971, it has a three-crore population and 12 districts. The 12 districts in the Andhra area can be divided again as follows : Circar or coastal districts (8); Rayalaseema districts (4); with the nine Telangana districts, now they constitute Andhra Pradesh. The boundaries now are : east—sea coast; south—Tamil Nadu, West—Karnataka; North—Maharashtra; North-East—Bastar area of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa State.

Andhra had a predominantly peasant economy. While the Circar districts were comparatively more developed economically, socially and politically with a number of projects and other irrigation facilities, the Rayalaseema districts are backward in all respects, with a backward agriculture, no big projects and more domination of feudal relations and oppression. There were hardly any big industries except in Vizagapatnam district, where the shipbuilding yard owned by the Scindias and two jute mills owned by Europeans, were situated, and railways in the whole of Andhra. The rest of the working class was mostly dependent for its livelihood on petty industries such as tobacco, mica mines, foundries, rice and oil mills, etc. Ninety per cent of the whole population lived on agriculture in villages.

### **Communist Party**

*The Communist Party in Andhra was officially organised in September 1934. The development of the Communist movement in India was a terror for the imperialists and they banned it in 1934, even before its branches could be organised in Andhra.*

The Communists, while working in the Congress organisation, conducted agitation on the demands of agricultural labour and

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*\*Taken from "Telangana People's Struggle And Its Lessons" written by P. Sundarayya.*

poor peasants in the villages and the working class in towns and could build up their independent base among them, to a considerable extent.

Forced by the anti-fascist war situation, the imperialists lifted the ban on the Communist Party in 1942. Communists came out legally and directly plunged into the battle against fascism. While ceaselessly campaigning for the release of Congress leaders and formation of a National Government they took up the day-to-day issues of the people: conducted agitations, led deputations, organised demonstrations, and held meetings on such issues as supply of agricultural implements, repairs of tanks, roads and canals, against blackmarket and for strict price controls, against hoarding and corruption. They led a number of agricultural labour struggles and the "grow more food" campaign. In the towns wide support was mobilised behind the working class demands and the Party led some of their strike struggles successfully. Volunteers of the Communist Party were able, in many towns, to successfully unearth the hoards of blackmarketeers, and force the Government to distribute them to the people.

Communists fought on the political, economic and social issues of every section of the toiling people; on such peasant demands as fair price for his produce, for supply of agricultural implements and fertilisers; on working class demands for supply of all necessities of life at controlled rates and increase in wages; on student demands for supply of white paper, kerosene at controlled rates, against detentions, for amenities such as tiffin sheds, rest rooms, in the educational institutions; on such women's demands as provision of separate sanitary facilities in villages, for maternity and welfare centres, for strict implementation of the anti-child marriages Act, for educational facilities and for equal rights; on middle-class issues against high house rentals, housing scarcity, etc. In one word, wherever and whenever people were in difficulties, there you could see a Communist with a red flag on his shoulder. That was a common phenomenon in those days.

All through these campaigns, the main political task of the people—the struggle against fascism—was specially stressed and

achievements of the Soviet Union were widely popularised. For carrying on a ceaseless campaign for the release of Congress leaders, a large number of our leading cadres were kept in prison all through the period.

It was this constant and ceaseless work on people's issues, close ties with the people through thick and thin, that enabled the Communists to rally 100,000 people at the All-India Kisan Sabha Conference, held in Bezwada in 1944 and the next year, 50,000 to the Provincial Kisan Sabha Conference in Tenali.

These ever-growing activities and increasing influence of the Communists was a bitter pill to the Congress leaders, mainly coming from liberal landlord sections, who had just come out of jails. They realised that if the Communists were allowed to grow at this rate, their social order of class exploitation would be at an end. So, under the open instigation of Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya and N.G. Ranga, all-India Congress leaders, raids were organised on party offices, attacks were made on individual Party members and important leaders, and Party rallies were disturbed. The Communist Party scented the danger underlying these goonda attacks, organised the PVB (People's Volunteer Brigade) and gave the slogan : "defend the people", "beat back the goondas", and "expose the reactionary Congress". Under the leadership of the anti-Communist fire-eater Ranga, Party and mass rallies in Krishna and Guntur districts were attacked. There was not a single meeting, demonstration or cultural performance that was not attempted to be disrupted by them. But, thanks to the timely sensing of this menace and immediate mobilisation and defensive actions, they were everywhere put on the run, the Party was saved and the revolutionary movement was defended and extended.

### **Elections And After**

World War II was terminated with the smashing of Nazi Germany and fascist Japan. The working class in India began to rise. There was a gigantic mass upsurge and a huge strike wave, highlighted by INA demonstrations, the RIN Revolt, the all-India postal workers' strike, etc. The British imperialists saw this as a challenge to its colonial rule and in order to divert the attention of the people from

the revolutionary path, announced elections to provincial legislatures.

In Andhra, the Communist Party put up 35 candidates (in half of the total constituencies) and fought the elections with the two main slogans of "land to the tiller" and "Vishalandhra in a people's India". Goondas were freely employed against the Communist election campaign and the Congress-Justice Party-zamindar alliance littered money all over to buy votes. Unashamedly, they sought police and goonda help to frighten the voters. But the PVB volunteers were rallied and the Congress volunteers and goondas were kept at bay.

The results of the elections showed that the Communist Party was the biggest and the most influential Party after the Congress in Andhra. The Party polled 2.5 lakh votes in all, and 22 per cent of the total votes polled in the constituencies contested by Communists. In the strongholds of Krishna and Guntur districts, the percentage was 35 and 25 respectively of the total votes polled. And, at the time, franchise in India was limited to only 13 per cent, the vast mass of toilers, who form the bulk of the supporters of the Communists, were deprived of their voting right. It was not a surprise, therefore, that Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya gave a statement warning Congressmen not to be complacent and run mad with their victory but note the dangerous significance of the Communist vote.

Congress Ministries took up office when the entire situation was like an erupting volcano. The post-war crisis had deepened, prices of daily necessities of life had shot up sky-high; more and more were swelling the ranks of the unemployed; the blackmarketeers, capitalists and landlords, who made bumper profits out of the war by fleecing the people, were reluctant to pay any attention to the workers and agricultural labour who had become extremely restive and begun agitating for their just demands.

A wave of strikes swept Andhra, both in the villages and the towns. Agricultural labour and farm servants in hundreds of villages struck work demanding increase in their yearly and daily wages, wages in kind to be given with correct measures, for holidays and regular hours of work. The peasants in Munagala

and Challapalli occupied zamindari lands and began to fight the repression that ensued.

The strike of ten thousand tobacco workers (which broke out the very next day after the Congress Ministries took office); one thousand textile workers of Pandalapaka, the cart-pullers in Rajahmundry, the cigar workers and a host of other workers belonging to other trades came out on the streets on strike for their minimum demands; of particular importance was the province-wide strike of 20,000 municipal workers, who were paid a pittance of Rs. 4.72 per month.

All the above strikes and especially the municipal workers' strike exposed the Congress "people's Government" in its true colours. Instead of conceding the most elementary and minimum demands of the workers, the Congress rulers, following in the footsteps of their predecessors, the British imperialists, let loose their police force, imposed Section 144, made lathi-charges, raided the bustees of municipal workers and arrested scores of militant workers. The biggest of the Congress leaders in Andhra came out as strike-breakers and swept the roads. The Congress Government pleaded, "We came to power only four months ago." The workers replied : "You have got time and money to raise your own salaries from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1500 but to pay a few rupees more for us, time and money are lacking for you?" At times, the strike of municipal workers reached such heights when workers, for example in Rajahmundry, came into clash with the blacklegs and Congress volunteers.

Such was the black record of the Congress "people's Government" in the first six months itself ! Why this dogged refusal of the Congress Government to concede the demands of the toiling people, and resort to brutal repression? It was nothing but their class interests and growing fear of class revolution.

The above struggles were conducted under the banner of the Andhra Provincial Trade Union Congress, the only Andhra-wide trade union organisation which was led by the Communist Party. The Congress leaders were afraid of the growing forces of revolution. For, what was the position of the Communist Party at the end of 1946?

As a result of its all-sided mass work, the Party was able to draw over to its side the wide strata of urban poor and the rural toilers, especially the agricultural labourers and poor peasants, for whose rights the Party was fighting ever since its inception in 1934. It could stand face to face with the Congress in the elections and poll 2.5 lakh votes.

It had organised separate class and mass organisations of workers, agricultural labourers, kisans, students, youth and women and championed their rights. It made the people realised that it was only the Communist Party that could doggedly defend their rights and not the Congress in power. This feeling of the people found expression in the words, "the future belongs to us!" And the class enemy, too, could not but see the truth.

The Party came out as the stalwart defender of toilers' rights by leading their day-to-day struggles on urgent economic issues. The Communist Party stood against all injustices, inequality, and suppression of fundamental rights. Such was the influence of the Party in the villages that not only on economic demands, but for every trifling matter such as kerosene or rice ration cards, or excess municipal taxes or some social injustice, etc., they used to rush to the office of the Party and seek redress of their grievances.

In the social sector, it had fought the devil of untouchability. Members of the party shared food with untouchables, lived with them and shared their sorrows and joys. Moreover, the very nature of the class struggles was such that it had unified under one banner the touchables and untouchables as well. Marriage ceremonies were simplified, doing away with priests and mantrams; widow-remarriage and inter-caste-marriages were widely popularised and members of the Party were always in the forefront. Equality between men and women was advocated.

A new culture was introduced. The youth of the towns and villages were drawn into the new life of activity. They were mobilised under the flag of the Andhra Youth Federation, the only organisation of its kind. They participated in games, yearly sports on the occasion of national festivals, joined volunteer

squads, trained themselves in the use of lathi, took part in drama and *burra katha* squads, and were also imbued with the fighting consciousness against imperialism. The Communist Party's name had become so synonymous with all good youth in the villages that even some of the old folk in the houses used to prevail upon their sons or grandsons to go and join the Youth Leagues so that they might be schooled and disciplined as good citizens.

The Communist Party had revived languishing cultural forms like *burra katha*, *veedhi bhagavatham*, etc., and through them approached the masses. Hundreds of squads and drama groups functioned all over Andhra. Through these cultural forms, stories of peasants' lives, biographies of national heroes, militant struggles of the Andhra people, heroic exploits of Soviet guerrillas, were all popularised. The number of people that attended the cultural performances ranged from 3,000 to 10,000. There were many instances when the middle class people and intelligentsia preferred to attend a *burra katha* performance to a cinema. This had changed the tastes of the people so much that the professional dramatists had to adopt themselves to this change, partly giving up their religious and "ethical" performances.

Through innumerable mass meetings, through *Prajasakti*, organ of the Communist Party, the peasants had been politicalised; they came to know much about the Soviet Union, the fortress of socialism, and about the heroic struggle of the Chinese people. Prajasakti Publishing House published a record number of nearly 300 books on various topics : politics, theory of Marxism, histories of various countries, on literature, on science, on economics, short stories, dramas, *burra kathas*, etc., which no other organisation could do up till then. On every burning problem of the people and the country, on every significant event in the international field, PSPH came out with a pamphlet and constantly kept the people abreast of events, and brought the general masses to a higher political level.

The following figures of membership give an idea of the development of the Communist Party and various mass organisations during 1945-46.

Communist Party	20,000 (in 2,000 villages)
Andhra Prov. Kisan Sabha	1,75,000
Andhra Prov. Agri. Labour Union	60,000
" " Students' Federation	12,000
" " Youth Federation	50,000
" " Mahila Sabha	20,000
" " Trade Union Congress	30,000

Thus, in spite of certain reformist mistakes and politics, the Communist Party in Andhra became a broad mass Party, came forth as the champion of the toiling masses, as the unquestioned leader of the workers, as builder of the revolutionary peasant movement, as the staunch fighter for social justice and as the beacon light of a new culture in Andhra.

It was this widening mass base and influence of the Communist Party that made the Congress leaders in power panicky. They saw in the growth of the Party the impending doom of their class exploitation; they noticed that more and more people were rallying under the banner of the Communist Party and their own base was shrinking. In order to save their exploiting regime, their moneybags, their staunch supporters, the zamindars and landlords, the Congress Government swooped down like a mad dog on the Communist Party in Andhra.

### **Black Act Promulgated—Repression Begins**

The Prakasam Ministry, which was then in office in Madras province, promulgated the 'Public Safety (Prajarakshana) Ordinance', popularly known as the 'Public Disaster (Prajabhakshana) Ordinance' on January 22, 1947, on the eve of Independence Day on January 26. Hundreds were arrested and detained without cause, without trial. Offices of the Communist Party, trade unions and Kisan Sabha were raided and records were confiscated.

Here it is necessary to note that the Communist Party was neither preparing for the overthrow of the Government by force, nor was it indulging in violence of any sort, as was slandered by the Congress Government. The Party was just championing the day-to-day interests of the workers, of agricultural labour and



poor peasants; it was leading struggles for their just demands, the elementary right of the people even in a bourgeois parliamentary democracy. And for this 'crime' the Congress Ministry replied with this Black Act. Thus it was the Congress Government that started the unwarranted offensive against the Communists and the people and not the other way round, as the Government shamelessly propagated in its lies later.

The democratic toiling masses could not tolerate this foul offensive on the fundamental rights of the people and parties. Ten thousand workers in Rajahmundry came out on a one-day strike demanding unconditional release of their leaders. The railway workers of Bitragunta and other centres also stopped work. Workers in Bezwada, Guntur, Pandalapaka, Vizag, Chittavalasa, the Kisan Sabha, the Agricultural Labour Association sent strong protest notes against this arbitrary action of the Government and demanded its withdrawal.

Nor had they been cowed down with the detention of their leadership. The economic crisis, the pro-capitalist and pro-landlord policies of the Congress Government and the intensifying repression on the peaceful population, forced them into further bitter struggle.

In **Gajullanka** of Divi taluka, Krishna district, the peasants began to assert their right on the *lanka* lands (riverbed lands). What did the Congress Government, which waxed eloquent promises during the elections, do? It did not come to the rescue of the poor peasants against the high-handedness of the Challapalli zamindar, who after the elections had overnight turned into a Congressman, but went to the assistance of the zamindar, with its police force and opened fire on the unarmed peasants, killing four, including a woman leader, Viyamma, and wounding scores of others. And note again, it was not the Communist guerillas that started the shooting, it was the Congress Government that fired the first shot on the unarmed people. It was not the Communists but the Congress Government that started the armed offensive.

In **Buchampet** of West Godavari district, the tribal peasants started a fight against the zamindar. The police came and shot four of them dead.

In **Kanur** and **Pandyala** and other centres of West Godavari district, the peasants stood against the oppression of the landlords and zamindars. The peasants' demands were so just that the Taluka Congress Committee and some members of the District Congress Committee came to their support and formed joint action committees. The Congress Government promulgated orders under Section 144 and lathi-charged the peasants. The landlords and the government let loose goondas throughout the district. As a result of this free reign of the landlord-goondas, in **Pedapadu** village in another part of the district, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a militant peasant youth and a member of the Party, was killed.

In **Munagala**, an enclave of Andhra in Hyderabad state, a traditional militant agrarian base, the peasants, under the influence of the sweeping land struggle of the Telangana peasants, seized 4,000 acres of zamindari lands. The police came and opened fire, killing two and injuring several others.

In **Divi** taluka of Krishna district, the peasantry in Challapalli estate occupied thousands of acres and the Congress police rushed to the aid of the zamindar and let loose terror on the fighting peasantry. In **Munagala** and **Challapalli** estates, over 50 were kept as detenus besides the arrest of several hundreds of people.

### **Independence And After**

It was constantly dinned into the people's ears that India had now achieved independence and the condition of the people would be bettered. But the toiling masses found the real class character of this independence. The Communist Party's influence went on increasing. Municipal elections were held all over Andhra only three months after the Mountbatten Award. The Communist Party contested these elections. In such important towns as Bezwada and Rajahmundry, Communists won 1/3 of the total seats. Altogether the Communists won 36 seats all over Andhra, in half a dozen municipalities.

These victories of the Communists, that, too, within 3 months of independence, made the bourgeois landlord government panicky. As it was, the sweep of the struggles of the agricultural labourers, farm servants, the working class and the peasantry

during the one year of the Congress regime in the provinces was enough of an indication of the anti-people character of the regime of the Congress.

### **Heroic Telangana—A Constant Terror To The Congress Government**

Another factor also added to the fear of the Congress Government and later made them madder still. That was the surging peasant movement in Telangana, just across the border.

Already in the '40s, Communists in Krishna district of Madras Andhra had came into contact with the disillusioned Left-criented youth in the state (Hyderabad) and ever since then, had been tirelessly working for the cause of the peasants, who were most feudally exploited and oppressed under the Nizam-Deshmukh rule. They took up such immediate issues of the people as *vetti*, illegal exactions, bribery, etc., and fought against the local deshmukhs. When the deshmukhs let loose goondas, people resisted and drove them back. Then the Nizam's police and military came on the scene. They began to loot the property of the people, commit arson, murder and rape on a mass scale. In order to save their hearths and homes and their own lives from the murderous attacks, people formed into guerrilla bands and began putting up militant resistance under the political, organisational and ideological leadership of the Communist Party. The rule of the exploiters was coming to an end. Thousands of acres of land were being confiscated and distributed and people's committees were being established. The Razakar armies were let loose on the people. People under the leadership of the Andhra Mahasabha and Communist Party began heroically resisting the Nizam regime.

The Communist Party in Andhra, especially in the four coastal districts which were on the borders of Nalgonda and Warangal districts, served as a rear base for the Telangana fight. The Party in Andhra gave a call for all-out assistance to the struggle of the Telangana people against the Nizam, to help them overthrow the feudal regime and establish Vishalandhra. Thus, it sought to implement the election slogans of 1945-46, unlike the Congress whose promises evaporated into thin air. The call was responded to on a mass scale.

The Communist Party, the Andhra Provincial TUC and the Kisan Sabha welcomed and organised relief for the people from Telangana who sought protection from torture, rape and loot. The guerrilla fighters and leaders got the guidance and help they wanted. The whole movement was under the ideological, political and organisational leadership of the Communist Party. In the whole of Andhra, a national fervour to fight and liquidate Nizam's rule and unify Andhra had been roused. With what eagerness and readiness people came forward to help their fighting brethren across the border can be understood from the single fact, that in just three days, in Bezwada town alone, Rs.20,000 were collected for purchase of arms to the guerrillas. The Communist movement and the Party had become the backbone of the Telangana people's armed struggle.

The play, *Ma Bhoomi* (Our Land), depicting the life of Telangana peasants, the exploitation of deshmukhs and Nizam, police atrocities and the people's resistance and fight for land, which was written to popularise the agrarian revolt in Telangana, played a particularly significant role in rallying the people to the assistance of Telangana. Two hundred squads staged this play all over Andhra, in villages as well as towns. Lakhs of people saw it: lawyers, doctors, intellectuals, scientists, Congressmen, cinema stars, writers, one and all acclaimed the play as most effective. The funds collected through the staging of this play ran into a lakh of rupees. The Ministers, prevailed upon by the Congress MLAs, invited this drama squad and got the play staged in the Rajaii Hall (Government House in Madras). They saw with their own eyes what a powerful message it was giving to the people and banned it afterwards, though praising it to the skies on the spot.

Even the rabid anti-Communists had to reckon with the fact that it was the Communists who were really fighting the Nizam on the battle-field, while the state Congress leaders were fighting a 'ferocious' battle in the press from luxurious hotels like the Taj in Bombay, Woodlands in Madras, etc. The whole democratic press acclaimed the Communists as the real fighters against the Nizam. Even as late as in January 1950, a Telugu daily, *Andhra Prabha* of Goenka, commenting on the refusal of the Congress

Government to form Andhra Province, wrote: "It was the Communists that first started the fight for Vishalandhra; it seems it is under them only that the Andhra people will realise their cherished ideal of Vishalandhra."

In the course of a conversation in Bezwada town, Congress leaders were being criticised by a person who desired strongly the creation of the Andhra Province. The Congress leaders ridiculed him saying that he was talking like a Communist and joked, "wait, the Communists will get you Vishalandhra". To this, he retorted, "It is the Communists that propagated the demand for Vishalandhra in 1946, and they have taken up arms and have been fighting for it during the last four years, while the Congress has been promising the Andhra Province for the last 40 years and refuses even that much today."

While on the one hand, the Nehru-Patel Government stabbed in the back the fighting people of Telangana by entering into a standstill agreement with the Nizam and agreeing to supply arms to this butcher of the people, the Communists were leading the people fighting in the battle-fields and shedding their blood for the cause of the people, for the cause of Vishalandhra. This placed the Communist Party in Andhra not only as the workers' and peasants' leader but also as the champion and unifier of the Andhra people.

### **Two Years Of Terror-Rule In Andhra**

It was on January 31, 1948, that the Madras Congress Government launched its long-prepared offensive against the militant people's movement in Andhra and its leader, the Communist Party. The assassination of Gandhiji, and the consequent clashes between the people and the RSS gang, were only an excuse to carry out its fascist offensive. That night, the police swooped down on the office of the *Prajasakti*, Communist daily in Bezwada, the Party's City Committee office and the offices of the Krishna District Committee and the Andhra Provincial Committee of the Party and on the houses of many prominent Communists and their sympathisers and effected large-scale arrests. It hoped to bag the whole of the Communist

leadership of Andhra—an extended meeting of the Provincial committee was in session then just after the Provincial conference. But it failed in its objective in spite of its sudden swoop.

The reason behind this swoop, the first of its kind in the whole of India, was that the Communist Party in Andhra and the militant mass movement that was led by it and especially, the powerful people's movement in Krishna district was the strong base of support for the Telangana people's struggle for liberation against the Nizam and his Razakar gangs. So, when the Government of India entered into the standstill agreement with the Nizam, and when the Telangana Communists and the Telangana Andhra Mahasabha repudiated the standstill agreement and continued to wage the struggle with even arms in hand, the Congress got frightened. It was determined to crush and extinguish the Telangana people's struggle, so that it might not become the beaconlight to the oppressed masses of the rest of India. So, while on the one hand, it was helping the Nizam by supplying arms, on the the other hand, it prepared to clean up the rare base of the Telangana people's struggle in Andhra, especially in the Krishna, Guntur and Godavari districts.

After the first raid on the Communist and trade union offices in Bezwada, the Madras Government arrested 79 persons on the false charge of murdering one of the RSS men in the January 31 clashes. How false this charge was and how it was just no more than a pretext to round up the militant leadership was proved when in the above case, after two years of delaying the trial during which time many of the accused were refused bail and kept in jail or under detention, ultimately only 17 were convicted for forming an unlawful assembly and sentenced to two to three months' imprisonment in January 1950.

The Madras Government continued its preparations to liquidate the people's struggle in Krishna. It concentrated its armed police, the Malabar Special Police, in Krishna district while the government of India was massing Gurkha and Sikh battalions to intervene against the Telangana people's struggle under the proclaimed cover of protecting the Hyderabad people against the Nizam and his Razakar gangs.

In Krishna district, the people's movement in support of Telangana became intensified. The mass of agricultural labour, in more than 400 villages, were preparing for strike struggles to win their demands. Their demands were 30 bags of paddy, 8-hour day and 30 paid holidays. The peasants in the zamindari tracts refused to pay rent to zamindars and demanded that their rent be scaled down and the zamindari system be abolished. The Madras Government resorted to mass raids, mass beatings, arrests, destruction of properties and utensils, burning and razing down of houses, raping and murders. The Congress Seva Dal "volunteers" were pressed into service along with the Special Armed Police.

The usual technique in the raids was for a force of 200-300 policemen to surround a village during the night, not to allow anybody to go out from the house even to answer the calls of nature, gather men and women of the village in a cattle-shed and beat them, while some other batches of police entered the houses and began looking, breaking the furniture and utensils, tearing up sarees, shirts and dhoties to pieces and mixing dal, rice and pickles with kerosene and urine. They burnt and razed to the ground many houses, prevented cultivation of the lands of Communist workers and their relatives. Agricultural labour hamlets were the special targets in these raids. These raids continued for full three months from May to July. Though the main concentration was in Krishna district, raids took place in Guntur, Godavari and even Kurnool districts as they all bordered on Telangana.

It was estimated that more than—

1,000 villages were raided;

25,000 persons were beaten;

10,000 were arrested (including those who were let off after a day or two in police custody);

15 women were raped (those known cases where women came forward and exposed the brutalities of the police);

10 were murdered by the police and Congress Seva Dal "volunteers";

Rs. 500,000 worth of property was destroyed.

In the agricultural labour hamlets, the workers were beaten and forced to shout that 15 bags of paddy per year, or 8 annas (50 paise) per day would be enough and that they would give up their demand for 30 bags of paddy and Rs 1.50 per day.

Just one incident will show the brutality and organised murder that was carried on by the Congress Seva Dal. In Bezwada, the Congress goonda dal organised by M. Chitti, the Bezwada Congress leader, raided the offices of the City Committee of the Communist Party and trade union and killed Durgadasi Kanakayya and Tlupilla Appalaswamy, two Communist Cell Secretaries, and beat up a number of others and destroyed the whole office. The police who were on the scene did not intervene. Later, a case was launched against some of the goondas but Chitti was not among the accused and all those charged were acquitted. The Bezwada working class quarters were the special targets after that. Raids went on regularly in some place or other; people were arrested, tortured, and kept in demand for 15 days or more; some were detained or charge-sheeted and the rest released.

All the Communist municipal councilors in the whole province (about 30) were detained. The workers in Rajahmundry, Ellore, Guntakal, Bitragunta came out on repeated protest strikes against the arrests of their leaders and faced brutal lathi-charges.

The same vandalism and terror were rampant in the Razole taluka of East Godavari district. Here, the lands of agricultural labourers were forcibly auctioned and bought up by the rich landowners. The agricultural workers were terrorised and beaten to accept 8 annas as wages. Landlords like Lingamurthy Raju owning 1,250 acres of deltaic irrigated land and Bolla Bulliah owning 5,000 acres were the leaders and instigators of police raids in this taluka.

In spite of this terrific repression, August 15, 1948 was celebrated in hundreds of villages, denouncing the Congress Government for compromising with British imperialism on the question of full independence, and demanding stopping of military and Razakar atrocity in Telangana villages and pledging full support to the Telangana fighters in the struggle for liberation against the Nizam.

And the people, in spite of the terror, began to fight for their demands. Agricultural workers in Krishna district in about 90



villages went on strike or prepared themselves for strike and won wage increases of 3 to 5 bags of paddy. In Guntur district, in about 70 villages, and in Nellore in about 20 villages, they went on strikes and won their demands. In East Godavari district, in Razole and Ramchandrapuram talukas, agricultural workers struck work and won wage-increases. In Pithapuram taluka of East Godavari, during the replanting season, agricultural labourers in a few villages won from Rs.2 to Rs.3 per day. The movement for higher wages and holidays spread to the Rayalaseema districts, Cuddapah and Anantapur. In West Godavari, Nellore, Cuddapah and Anantapur districts, *banzar* lands (waste lands) to the extent of hundreds of acres were occupied by agricultural labourers and poor peasants.

The rising people's struggles for their demands, along with their resistance to the police, landlord and Congress Seva Dal terror made the Government even more panicky and it resorted to more and more mad repression.

While this rule of fascist terror continued, with its Public Safety ("Disorders") Act in operation which practically amounted to martial law in wide areas, district board elections were conducted. The Communist Party set up its candidates wherever it was possible and fought the Congress candidates. The results of the elections showed that the Congress Government was fast losing hold on the people, and the Communist Party was winning the masses in Andhra, in spite of 18 months of systematic police-goonda raj.

The Congress bourgeois-landlord Government panicked and banned the Communist Party in Madras province, the Provincial Kisan Sabha, the Andhra Provincial Agricultural Labour Association, the Andhra Provincial Youth Federation and all strong TUs in the province. The Government sent orders to all the heads of high schools and colleges in the province to drive out all Communist-minded students and their sympathisers from the educational institutions.

Anything in the nature of civil liberty was totally absent in the areas where the militant people's movements existed. In a word, these areas were declared disturbed areas with orders to the police to shoot at sight anybody whom they suspected as

Communists. The couriers, pilots, contacts, shelter keepers, etc., who accidentally fell into the hands of the police were subjected to sadistic torture like thrusting pins under fingernails, hanging them upside down, and all sorts of devilish brutalities.

Destruction of all properties, houses, furniture, including utensils, and open loot of every valuable went on a mass scale. In a number of villages in Andhra, there were dozens of families who were driven away from their homes and fields. The properties of underground comrades were confiscated and put to open auction. But nobody was prepared to buy them, nor for that matter, dared to do so because even the Congress bullies knew that it would be playing with fire.

In Krishna district, in Gudivada and Gannavaram in Divi taluka, they raided villages. In Ellamaru and Katru villages, they gathered men and women, beat the menfolk and stripped them naked. They tried to strip the women naked also, but the women resisted. Later they marched the naked men, followed by women, in a procession through the streets. In Ellamaru village, they made the naked persons prostrate before Mahatma Gandhi's statue. This was the Congress raj's latest homage to their "Mahatmaji". Similarly, nude processions were conducted by the Congress police in some other villages like Pedamkutevi, Pamullaka, etc.

In the village of Ellamaru, Comrade Daveedu, an old agricultural labour leader, was beaten because he refused to say "Congress-ki-jai." He kept shouting: "Communist Party ki-jai", till he fell unconscious. He was felled by innumerable lathi blows, he was arrested and later released on bail. Once again, in another raid, he was caught and beaten and left as dead. But he survived, got the red flag brought to him and saluted it.

Everybody who was arrested in Divi taluka was severely beaten. Dasari Venkateswar Rao got 300 blows and Nagabhushanam 100 lathi blows.

It had become the regular practice of the police to arrest people and keep them in police camps for days together without producing them before magistrates, subjecting them to beatings and tortures to force them to confess. Mandava Venkateswar Rao, Divi taluka, Krishna district, was beaten to death in the Pedamkutevi police camp by the police and Congress goondas.

Comrade M. Seetharamayya, Secretary of the Divi Taluka Committee of the Communist Party, was repeatedly beaten by the Special CID Inspector in Masulipatam but not a word came out from him. He was threatened that he would be shot dead. His brother Narsiah, a student worker in Bezwada, was arrested in mid-December and was kept for more than a month in a special camp of the DSP, Palaniappan, and along with ten others was tortured. No news of him was given even to his wife or nearest relatives.

Mandava Koteswar Rao of Amudallanka, who was charge-sheeted in the case of killing Venkatanarayana, was released on bail. But when he was going to the court, Congress goondas pounced upon him outside the village and beat him to death.

The police forced open the room of a newly-wed harijan couple, Prakash Rao and Sarojini in Divi taluka, and opening fire wounded them both.

Molesting women became a regular practice of the police and Congress Seva Dal members. Throwing the women out with their children at dead of night and burning their houses was another common practice.

In Neppali, Krishna district, Kodali Chittamma who had given birth to her child only a fortnight before, was beaten and dragged out of her house at night along with her children and the house was set on fire. All the household utensils and the foodgrains stored in it were also burnt down.

In Veeravasaram, Bhimavaram taluka, West Godavari district, the wife of Comrade Uddaraju Ramam, District Secretary, was beaten. Her three-year-old son was also beaten. Then they were threatened that they would be thrown out of the house because Comrade Ramam, when arrested, got out of their clutches with the help of the people.

Much worse things happened, too. In the village of Viswanathapalli, in Divi taluka at Krishna district, Congress Seva Dal goondas raped half a dozen women.

The village munsiff of Yeditha of Ramachandrapur taluk, East Godavari, got a woman raped by six of his goondas in his very presence and then thrust a bamboo into her genitals. And yet when this fascist was killed by the people, the Congress

Government raised a hue and cry, foisted a case, sentencing four to be hanged and eleven to transportation to life.

The police opened fire on an agricultural labour procession in Jupoodi, Bapatla taluka, Guntur district, killing one and wounding several. They announced to the press that they had to do so because villagers obstructed them from arresting Comrade Chenna Reddy, the village Communist leader.

In Pedapasapula village of Jammalamadugu taluka in Cuddapah district, again, the police opened fire on the people killing Kondareddi. Here, too, the people surrounded the police and set free Comrade Eswar Reddy, the district Communist leader, from the hands of the police.

In the village of Cheemalavagupalli in Anantapur district, the police opened fire on the agricultural workers because they had been on strike. Three people were killed.

And the Government did not stop with these atrocities. In Cuddalore jail, where Andhra detenus were detained it opened fire on the detenus, killing four comrades, including Comrade Anumarlapudi Seethmaramrao, Krishna district kisan leader. He was shot at point-blank range by the jail constables after he fell flat, with the gun held directly above him. The reason for this repeated firing on the Cuddalore detenus was that they demanded, among other things no segregation from the rest of the detenus; interviews with their wives and close relatives; allowance for their families; all kisan and worker prisoners to be treated as political and given special class; improved facilities and bettering of conditions of the ordinary convicts and transfer to their own district jails. They demanded that they be tried or released. Apart from four killed, nearly a hundred received gunshot injuries or severe injuries from lathi blows. In Salem jail, they opened fire, killed 22 Communist prisoners, all of them belonging to Kerala, and injured more than a hundred belonging to all regions of Madras state.

To terrorise the people, the Madras Government had adopted the same practice that the Indian Government's armed forces were following in Telangana, viz., shooting dead the captured leaders of the people.

The Madras Government and the Government of India were flabbergasted with the continued resistance of the Communists and of the people's movement both in the coastal districts as well as in the Nalgonda, Khammam and Warangal districts in Telangana. Frequent conferences of the police chiefs of the Madras, Hyderabad and the Government of India were held, plans were drawn up, which they announced would liquidate the Communists to a man in no time.

Thus, the years 1949 and 1950 saw a new pitch of intensified terror of mass raids, beatings, lootings, rapings and shootings of important peoples leaders and Communist leaders after their arrests, and these murders were announced to the press as "shot dead in encounter with the police".

### **People Fight Back**

The Party during the whole of 1948 was calling up the Party ranks and the people or bravely face the police attacks, not to leave the villages but assert their right to demonstrate and right to hoist red flags and fight back the police brutalities with whatever weapon they could lay their hands on. But the police came in hundreds and this call of frontal resistance reduced itself to militant satyagraha with backs and bones of our comrades broken and a number of important cadres arrested.

The people and the Party ranks were fed up with this form of resistance. In Jupudi village in Guntur district, they organised themselves into squads, retreated into neighbouring villages when the police came in large numbers, but the moment they went away, came back and attacked the landlords and their agents. This dingdong battle continued for more than a year.

In Davajigudem, Krishna district, the local cadres adopted similar tactics.

It was in November 1948, in Pedamuktavi village in Divi taluka, Krishna district, which was the worst target of Congress police brutalities, that the comrades mobilised themselves and entered the village, dragged out of their beds the landlords and their agents who were terrorising the whole neighbourhood, gave them a good thrashing.

People's reaction was "how long could the Communists keep mum in the face of the torture they were being subjected to : they have decided to fight back". This was the thought in everybody's mind.

A joint conference of Madras and Hyderabad police officials assisted by Central Intelligence officials took place. Open announcements were made that within a month or two, no Communist would be allowed to exist in the coastal districts and the same methods as in Telangana would be adopted. That meant that they could shoot any Communist they could lay hands on. The Congress Seva Dal and the landlords in villages were being armed and there was open talk in Congress offices that the Communists would be taught a lesson.

It was under these conditions that in July 1949, the Party gave the call "a tooth for a tooth" and "an eye for an eye", to fight back the landlord-police terror that had been going on for so long.

The Andhra State committee of the Party was opposed during the whole of 1948 to resort to arms in the Andhra area, as the people there had not yet developed to the stage of waging a struggle for land and defending it by arms as in Telangana. It also argued that the political-economic situation in the Andhra area under Congress regime was entirely 'different' from that prevailing in Telangana under the Nizam. But it yielded to this demand from the lower ranks and from the Telangana comrades to take up arms, and develop guerrilla movement to help the Telangana movement as well. But it was soon found that there was no mass participation and fighting as in Telangana, only squad actions, which were easily suppressed by brutal violence by the Congress regime. The Party latter came to the conclusion that these tactics were wrong and caused the Party great loss and damage; though by its brave fight against terror and immense sacrifices, it gained the respect of the toiling people and middle classes.

The Party at the time was still thinking that it was possible for the exposed leadership and ranks to function from neighbouring areas by taking up some profession as cover and eking out a living. It was a costly mistake to have entertained

such ideas when the people there were not participating and not ready to fight back the armed forces of the government actively and protect the cadres. We should have withdrawn to our Telangana bases in the forests and mountainous territory or a strong safe area, most of the exposed cadres and squads and continued the work in the old areas with entirely unexposed cadres. This bitter lesson the Party learned only after a few months of severe losses of cadre and Party leaders during March-June 1950.

The Government was ready with its plans to deal a heavy blow to the Party and the mass movement in the coastal districts. It was ready with increased police camps and with orders to shoot and kill any Communist leader and guerrilla and squad member who fell into their hands. During the year 1950, the coastal districts of Andhra were the scene of heroic struggles of the people, with people's resistance actions against the landlords and their agents on the one hand, and the mass butchery of the Congress Government to drown in blood the people's fight on the other.

### **People's Actions In Andhra**

In Krishna district, in Divi taluka, in the village Velivolu, goonda leader Basavayya destroyed property worth Rs. 50,000, collected a fine of Rs. 25,000 and stole hens and ducks. He enforced the wage rate of 8 annas (50 paise) when the normal rate was Rs. 1.50. His goonda camp was raided by the people and he was beaten and crippled for ever and two of his lieutenants were killed.

In Katur village of Gannavaram taluka, Ramalingayya was a Home Guard, a goonda, a landlord agent and an informer. His name was associated with all the loot, arson, attempts at raping, all other atrocities committed on the people during 1948-49. Tens of villages were raided under his leadership. A special police camp was opened in Katur village. Men and women who passed that way were caught and belaboured. This scoundrel used to jump over the compound walls into the home-yards when women were taking their baths. He was presented with a revolver by the government. But he was killed right in the village, with armed

police camp in the vicinity. In buses, coffee houses, trains the talk went round but not a word of sympathy for him was heard. People who saw the corpse at Vuyyur bus-stand on the way to Masula Hospital for post-mortem were heard saying, "he did such atrocious things and has got the punishment for it".

In Gannavaram taluka, right on the main Bezwada-Masula road, in the village Chinna Vogirala, two hated landlords were killed, right in front of the police camp, and their guns were seized. The police in Kankipadu station—just 10 miles away—locked themselves up and did not dare move out, in spite of frantic knocking at the door by the local landlords to come out and give them protection. Their reply was that they had to guard their station and after all, "we too have our families and children and our lives are dear to us".

In Tiruvur taluka, Krishna district, in December 1949, and again, in March 1950, people raided 20 villages and confiscated gold and guns from the landlords and killed a few of them, with the help of Telangana guerrillas.

In East Godavari district, in Razole taluka, Lingamurthy Raju, a big landlord, who upsoed 1200 acres of temple land, fertile deltaic soil, along with a few other big landlords organised some guards and instituted a reign of terror. These goonda landlords tried to seize the crops on lanka lands. The Government forcibly took over these lands that were being cultivated by agricultural labourers for 20 to 30 years and auctioned them to these landlords. Women and men led by the Party fought many a glorious struggle and saved their crops on the fields. Again and again, agricultural labourers went on strike struggles for higher wages. Women were in the forefront. They too got training in self-defence. When the husbands of some wanted to prevent them, the reply these brave women gave was : "You cannot save our honour or life. Yet you try to obstruct us from taking training to defend ourselves". Women acted as couriers, kept watch on police movements and conveyed information to Party leaders and protected them from the police.

After months of undergoing regular torture, agricultural labourers and poor peasants began to retaliate. Twenty of Lingamurthy's goondas were beaten to pulp. Some of them were



maimed for life. One goonda who used to participate in raids all day, used to come at night and boast before his wife, "I have kicked men all day and my legs are aching. Come and foment my legs with hot water." The people broke his legs for good.

In Edida, in Ramachandrapur taluka, East Godavari district, the village munsiff got the police to repeatedly raid the agricultural labour and poor peasant hamlets in all the neighbouring villages. Their huts were burnt. Some harijan women were raped on his orders in his very presence by 10 of his goondas. The people killed him, avenging the atrocities he had committed.

In West Godavari district, one Subbarayadu of Vemavaram village, Narsapur taluka, who brought the police to raid agricultural labour quarters 27 times within a period of one year, was killed by the people.

In Korukollu village, Bhimavaram taluka, West Godavari district, the district Party Secretary was rescued by the villagers from police hands. The police camped there and destroyed houses and forced many peasants to leave their villages. The village munsiff of Kanchumoru used to aid the police in these atrocities. The people burnt down his house and property and warned him and his family not to indulge in any more atrocities on the people, otherwise, next time, the consequences would be much more severe.

In Guntur district, in Veluru village of Narasaraopeta taluka, the agricultural labourers with the help of the poor and middle peasants, began to fight for higher wages. They were subjected to innumerable raids. Their houses were destroyed. The agricultural labourers retaliated and destroyed the tobacco crops of the hated landlords. The landlords immediately bowed down, pleaded for terms. The landlords were forced to make good all the losses suffered by the villagers. All the cases against the villagers were to be withdrawn. The police camp was to be removed from the village. The landlords complied with all these terms. But they were biding their time. The moment they harvested their crop and sold it, they got back the police and mass shooting started in Guntur district. In the two months of April and May, nearly 70 persons were arrested and shot dead by the Congress armed police, 15 of them in the neighbourhood

of Veluru village, including the leader of the area, Comrade Donda Narayanaswamy.

Telangana guerrilla squads helped the people to raid the Atchampet police station. They shot dead two constables, took possession of 70 guns. This was the first major action against a police station by guerrillas in the coastal districts. This action was followed by other actions in about 15 villages where the hated landlords were killed by the guerrillas. Most of these actions took place in the border talukas of Guntur-Paland-Sattenapalli, the Telangana guerrillas made the forests nearby their base of operations.

Telangana guerrilla squads aided their colleagues from Andhra area to operate throughout the whole forest region of Nallamala covering Kurnool and Guntur districts on the banks of the Krishna River.

In the whole of Andhra, in about 100 villages, people attacked landlords or their agents, killed some of them, destroyed property of some others and seized guns from them.

It had been the common practice in every raid to burn all the debt and mortgage bonds of the hated landlords. This fact was announced to the villagers by leaflets and they were asked not to re-write the bonds or pay their debts. The landlords concerned were threatened with dire consequences if they tried to collect the debts with the help of the police.

In many villages, the agricultural labour and the poor raided landlords' granaries and distributed the grain. In a number of other villages, the paddy crop was cut and taken away.

The people hated the landlords and the police agents. They helped to destroy the enemy properties. The villagers, especially agricultural labourers and poor peasants, gave shelter to Party leaders and cadres at great risk to their life and property. They guarded and sheltered them as their own sons. In Antarvedipalem, East Godavari district, when a group of 20 villages was surrounded by 3,000 armed police and Congress Home Guards, not one single Party comrade was caught. The people saved them all, though for one full week, the police went on arresting and beating every male in that whole area. It was the agricultural labour women that came forward to act as couriers. In spite of

this white terror, hundreds of Party members and tens of organisers continued to live in the villages. This was possible only because of the tremendous cooperation of the people and especially the agricultural labour and poor peasants.

All the poorer classes considered that the Communist Party was their Party. They believe that only under people's Government headed by the Communist Party would their sufferings come to an end. In the talukas bordering Telangana, they were eagerly awaiting the Communist guerrillas to come and distribute the land. Even in far-off Cuddapah, where in a few villages the agricultural labourers and poor peasants occupied wasteland under Communist Party leadership the talk went round that Nalgonda Communists had come and were distributing the land. In Palnad taluka, Guntur district, when squads were going through new areas where no movement had ever existed, poor peasants approached the squads and asked them to drive away the landlords and agraharamdars and rid them of this feudal pest. The moment the guerrillas began to raid the hated landlords' houses and the police station and seize arms the enemy became terror-stricken. The hated landlords, the moneylenders began to leave the villages and flee to the towns. This was a very common feature in many villages of Krishna and Guntur and the two Godavari districts. The remaining goondas in the village slept together at a place, guns by their side and with sentries posted all night, changing their places frequently.

With the raid on the police station of Atchampeta, the confusion and terror of the enemy increased by leaps and bounds. "The Communists captured 70 guns, how can we live now?" This was what Sri N.G. Ranga exclaimed! This same Congress leader who had demanded that the Communists must be hunted down and wiped out by declaring by Martial Law, did not dare move out without a police lorry to protect him on his tours in Guntur district. Vallabhbhai Patel, the Congress leader of fascist terror in India, had to admit in Parliament in Delhi "that the people of Andhra are not co-operating with them in suppressing the Communists."

### **Mass Butchery By The Government**

Comrade Chintapalli Paparao, Krishna district Secretariat member of the Party, was arrested in Suurampalli village in Gannavaram taluka in October 1959, on Deepavali day by Palaniappan, the Special DSP in Krishna. This scoundrel demanded from Paparao his resignation from the Party. Paparao spat on him and shouted, "Communist Party Zindabad". Palaniappan shot at his tied arms and once again demanded his resignation. Paparao shouted back, "You cut, had I got information of your raid just half an hour before, I would have seen your blood." He was shot in the thigh and he fell down, but he refused for the third time to give up his Party. He died with the victory cry, "Communist Party Zindabad" on his lips when the third shot pierced his heart. Thousands of people gathered at Gannavaram hospital in spite of police terror to have a last glimpse of their beloved leader. Nobody believed the Congress communique that the police officer shot him dead as he was about to stab the officer!

Comrade Mrityan Jayudu, West Godavari district Secretariat member, was arrested in a house in Rajahmundry, taken to the outskirts of the town near the present paper mills, and shot dead. The news was given out that he died in a clash and the rest of his colleagues managed to escape. (May 16, 1950)

Devarakonda Subba Rao, leader of Pendyala-Kanur peasant struggle and District Committee member of Godavari, was arrested from the Nidadavolu and was immediately shot dead on the canal bund. Comrades Narra Anjaneyulu, Padala Subba Rao, Edupiganti Purnachandrarao, West Godavari district Secretariat members, were arrested in various dens (secret houses where underground comrades lived) and were shot dead in cold blood. Comrades Kalidindi Suryanarayan Raju (Tunuku taluka leader), R. Ayyaparaju, A. Ramraju (Narsapur leaders), were arrested and shot dead. (May 28, 1950)

Nadella Venkata Krishnayya, Divi Area Committee member, was arrested in Ellur den and shot dead on the spot. Yelmannchili Venkateswar Rao, another area committee member, was arrested from a Madras City den, brought to Divi taluka and shot dead

along with Dasari Nagabhushanam of Divi taluka. This was in July or August 1950.

Comrades Chlasani Jagannathrao, Secretary of the Divi Area Committee, one of the founder-members of the Communist Party in Krishna district, was arrested in Rayaguda in Orissa province along with Bh. Ramarao and Tottenpoodi Narayana Rao, and Comrade Seetaramayya on November 16, 1950. They were taken to Divi taluka and were shot dead. The story given out by the Government was that they were shot dead in an encounter.

Comrade Challapalli Narayana Rao, the beloved Communist leader of agricultural labourers of Divi taluka and Krishna district, along with Comrade Gogineni Tatayya, another Divi leader, was arrested at V. Kothapalli and both were shot dead.

Comrade Satyaprasad, Gannavaram Area Committee member, was arrested at Nandyal in Kurnool district and was taken back to his village and shot dead along with three other Communist cadres arrested at different places. Katragadda Chinna Venkatarayudu (the hero of many a people's action, especially the lighting attack on Chinnavogirala) and his companion, Comrade Kadiyala Narayana Rao, both of whom had reorganised the Gannavaram area Party, were traced to a Bezwada den and were arrested and shot dead in the first week of December 1950.

Comrades Edpungunti Subba Rao, Pathuri Narashima Rao, Konoru Mallikarjuna Rao were arrested at Bhimavaram and were shot dead. They were betrayed by the renegade and traitor, Potluru Sundaram.

Comrades Chelsani Rajagopal Rao of Nuzvid taluka, Alluri Purnachandra Rao and Matireddi Satyanarayan, Gudivada area leaders of Krishna district, were arrested and shot dead.

Most of the Munagala party leaders, Comrades Vangali Papayya, Gattu Gopalakrishnayya and others were shot dead.

Comrades Kandikatla Nabhusanam, East Godavari district Secretariat member, who was arrested in the then French territory of Yanam in the last week of September 1950, was extradited and the next day, was shot dead. The story given out was that he tried to escape while at morning ablutions.

Comrade P. Anantam and Chintam Satyanarayana Doss, the other two members of the East Godavari district Secretariat,

were also arrested in a village near Samalkot and were shot dead there itself, tied to a tree.

Chalasani Sreenivasa Rao, a member of the Andhra Student Fraction Committee, was arrested in a Masula den and later shot dead. Kanchan Rao, a student in Bezwada, was arrested as he was coming out of the examination hall and was shot dead.

Ravi Bheema Rao, a student from Divi taluka, studying in Guntur College, was arrested, then taken to Divi taluka and shot dead. Comrade Bellam Shobhanadhri, Bezwada labour leader, was arrested and was shot dead. These and many other names were not even announced in the press by the Government.

Comrades Kasturi Kutumba Rao, Secretary, Andhra Handloom Weavers Association, Chivukula Sesha Sastry, Bapatla town Party leader, M. Lakshiminarayana, District Teachers' Federation Secretary, Danda Narayanaswamy, Narsaraopet taluka party leader, Dasari Subbyya, Rapalle taluka leader. Mallikarjuna Sarma, Guntur District agricultural labour leader Madala Kotayya and Narasayya of Ongole taluka were all arrested and were coldbloodedly shot dead.

One of the death-defying stories comes from the town of Bapatla. Here there was an underground den of the Tenali Area Committee. Kanmataneni Venkataratnam, the area Committee member, was staying there with Comrade Moturi Venkataratnam's family, his wife and her two-year-old baby. The police surrounded the house. Comrade Venkataratnam refused to surrender. He wanted to fight the marauding police and teach them a lesson. He asked the Moturi family to go by the back door while he covered the police with his fire. They refused to leave their leader alone. A gun battle developed. The police inspector was felled (later he died). The police could not overcome the resistance, so they set fire to the house with petrol. Comrade Kantamaneni Venkataratnam and his den-keeper, Moturi Venkataratnam and his two year-old-baby in the hands of the mother, died of gun shots.

Janakiyamma, of Ramapuram village in Polnad taluka, because she had been giving shelter to Telangana guerrillas, was molested and tortured and shot dead. Besides her, all other cadres of the area were shot dead. The excuse was that they aided the Telangana

guerrillas who had raided Atchampeta police station and killed notorious police agents like the village karanam of Ramapuram.

The Government adopted a policy of hoodwinking the underground comrades. It announced that Potluru Sundaram and Telekepalli Krishnamurthy were shot dead in an encounter, when in reality, after their arrests, they became Government agents and led the police to arrest a large number of underground comrades. Potluru Sundaram betrayed Comrade Edpugunti Subba Rao and his colleagues in Bhimavaram, Tummulapalli Goppya and his companions in Dhowleswaram, whom the police arrested and shot. This Sundaram got lands from the police at various places and became a Congress leader carrying on his nefarious activities. Telekepalli Krishnamurthy was sent with police escort to entice the Telangana guerrillas and Guntur comrades who were with them in Nallamala Krishna forests, but the guerrillas shot him dead.

In a separate appendix, we are giving a list of the comrades shot dead during the years of Congress regime in the districts of Andhra area, the Martyrs, roll coming to about 300.

Here below are some press statements about the naked police zoolum in Andhra, that appeared at that time:

### **Some Statements on Repression In Andhra**

Sri Vemula Kurmayya, former Congress Minister for Harijan Uplift, member, Madras Legislative Assembly, issued a statement on the shameless police atrocities in the village of Yelamarru, an extract from which is given hereunder:

“Before day break on 14th July, 1949, 200 MSP raided the village of Yelamarru. They surrounded the village and did not allow anybody to leave. After daybreak, they gathered the villagers in three batches in the local high school compound. They stripped them naked and each was given ten strips. Then they forced the villagers to parade throughout the village, in their nakedness! When some tried to hide their shame with their hands, they were beaten again. Some of them were made to lie prostrate before Gandhi statue and were given more blows. Even after this the clothes were not returned but they were asked to go home and appear before their womenfolk naked and to come back attired in new clothes. Both untouchables and touchables were

among the people who were subjected to this atrocious humiliation and beating.

"All the women in the harijan colony were made to stand in the maiden and were beaten. The menfolk in their nakedness were asked to go to them and each to bring his wife. One was ordered to strip naked his wife who was 16 years old. He refused. They threatened the woman and asked her to strip herself naked. She refused and replied, 'You may kill me but I will never debase myself.' Thereupon a policeman was about to strip her naked, when the village munsiff prevented him, warning that it would lead to trouble. After this, the women were beaten again, and were allowed to go home.

"In all the villages of the district, the people are asking about these village atrocities, which they say, are worse than Punjab atrocities perpetrated by the British imperialists in 1919.

"I want the premier and the Telugu Ministers to tour these villages in the district which are subjected to police raids and vouchsafe peace and protection for the people. Otherwise, the people may revolt in sheer exasperation." (*Andhra Prabha*, July 23, 1946)

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Sri I. Lingayya, President of the Gudivada Taluka Congress Committee, and Sri B. Visweswar Rao, member of the Working Committee of the APCC, jointly issued the following statement to the press:

'Police have surrounded the village on 14th morning. Then they gathered all the villagers including a few Communists at a place. They were stripped naked, lathi -charged, paraded in the streets in nakedness, and were made to prostrate before Gandhiji statue. We feel that no democratic Government can tolerate these shameless and uncivilised atrocities... they have maligned the pious and high ideals of Gandhiji by making naked people prostrate before Gandhi statue. It is absolutely necessary that a just enquiry is made about these atrocious deeds....

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Sri Yenigalla Venkatramayya, president of the Yelamaru Village Congress Committee, in a statement said:



"There was a raid on our village on 14th of this month. This kind of raids is one of the important items in the constructive programme of the Government. The Communists may be arrested; but even some village elders and some Congressmen were stripped of their clothes and beaten. This is a permanent blot on the history of the Congress. By doing so, people lose their sympathies and confidence in the Congress and develop hatred towards it. This makes the existence of Congress committees in villages impossible.." (*Andhra Prabha, July 26, 1949.*)

Sri A. Chakradhar, Secretary of the Andhra Socialist Party, in a letter to the Editor of the Andhra Prabha dated July 22, 1949, said :

"300 police have raided the village of Katur, Gannavaram taluka, Krishna district on the 16th of this month. All men in the village—irrespective of their creed—were cruelly lathi-charged. Women were abused.

"About 400 men were stripped of their clothes and paraded on the streets in nakedness. Some women were also among them. But they were not made naked.

"Are these the measures police have to adopt under Congress rule? It is natural that a critical situation arises in the country if Congress leaders and officials keep quiet. And Congressmen can be held responsible for such a critical situation.

"I request that the Madras Government orders a non-official enquiry into the incident and takes sufficient precautions that such incidents do not occur in future." (*Andhra Prabha, July 24, 1949*)

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Andhra Prabha, leading Telugu daily of Andhra, in its editorial dated July 26, 1949, wrote :

"Uncivilised, atrocious, unspeakable—these may be very strong words; but even these words are not sufficient to describe the barbarous raids by police in Krishna district.

"The same gruesome and sordid story from every village—gather all people, indiscriminately beat them, strip some of them of their clothes, parade those people in the streets in nakedness.

"...By doing such things, it does not result in suppressing the Communists; but only creates hatred against the Congress.

Loyalty towards the Congress does not increase but only makes the people think that British raj is better.

"In their efforts to suppress the Communists in Krishna district, civil liberties are not only infringed but a situation is created when people have to feel shame for being born as people of India.

"...Besides stopping such atrocities, the officials responsible should be punished.

"We came to know that Sri Madhava Menon (Minister of Law) has brushed off these incidents as Communist propaganda. It is not correct. Those who have written letters to our office are all Congressmen and they wrote only after personally visiting the villages and after enquiry.

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The repression was so brutal, atrocious and wanton that the very Congress leaders who themselves brought and organised police raids on villages, were forced to issue statements in the press condemning it, seeing the anger of the people.

Marupilla Chitti, Krishna district Congress leader (who got two Communists killed in Bezwada) said :

"Seva Dals (Congress volunteer squads) are being fed with the money looted during the raids in the villages. Drunkards, habitual convicts, have become village Congress leaders... Loot, burning of houses, murders are being committed..." (*Andhra Patrika, April, 21*)

N. Venkatramana, a Congressman and President of the Repalle Panchayat Board (Guntur district), said :

"... 60 MSP men are camping in Repalle Board School. Since they came, people are terrified to go that way... Recently, a policeman went and asked a trader the cost of a soap. He was told it costs 5½ annas. The policeman angrily remarked, 'For us, the same price?' And went away. They came in the evening, beat him black and blue, and took him away to their camp... One day, when a shepherd came to the high school ground to graze his sheep, police forcibly caught two sheep and ate them. Recently, a lambadi woman ( a tribal woman) came into the village to buy some salt. The police caught hold of her, took her to the camp and many of them raped her cruelly. When she fell unconscious,

she was left near the railway station of Repalle... In the same way, another woman who was going to her village, after seeing a picture, was caught hold of and raped..." (*Andhra Prabha*, May 22, 1950)

Gogineni Laxminarayana, a rabid anti-Communist Congress leader and brother of N. G. Ranga, APCC President, said:

"In the night of July 26, 1950, the sub-inspector of police of Phirangipuram, with some constables, raided Nudurupadu village... In every house, cots, pickle jars, cement water tube, brass utensils, etc., were smashed and littered all over. Six or seven castor oil tins of some traders were opened and the oil emptied on to the ground.

"K. Laxminarayana, who was a victim of police atrocities, said to me :

'At 4 p.m. police came. They asked : You son of a bitch, are you a Communist leader ? So asking, I was beaten heavily. I fell unconscious. They spoilt all the foodstuffs and other things in my house, looted all the money, and went away. Doors and cots were broken'. ... The police went to T. Obulreddi's house. He and his wife, seeing the police atrocities, went to another house for shelter. Police entered his house, damaged the house, smashed jars, brass utensils, cots, almirahs, etc.

"U. Pitchireddi was beaten with the butt-end of guns and lathis. His property was destroyed. He was arrested, and was being taken to Subbareddy's house. (This Subbareddy is the biggest landlord and was the initiator of these raids.) Meanwhile, Subbareddy came that way. The police officer asked Subbareddy whether he was satisfied. He replied, "No, not yet. Some more people should be made to sit in a row and beaten..."

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The Sattenapalli Congress Committee, Narsaraopet Municipality, Tanuku Congress Committee and a host of others issued statements condemning this repression.

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Mr. C. V. Rajagopalachari, Secretary of the Civil Liberties Union, Madras, in a special report to its general body, said :

"Seven peasants were forcibly taken by the armed special police from the villages of Kodur, Velvadam and Ganapavaram

and they were alleged to have been shot dead in Butchireddipalem near Mylavaram.

“Challapali Narayanarao and Tatiah, who were hiding in the vicinity of Kothapalem, were captured by the men belonging to the party of landed aristocrats and handed over to the police party headed by the circle inspector, Avanigadda. They were shot dead. This incident was also reported as an encounter between the police and the Communists. But later on, it was reported that a reward was distributed to the men, who captured them both.

“Venkateshwar Rao of Movva village was captured by the men belonging to the party of the landed aristocrats and beaten to death at Pedamuktevi police station. His maternal uncle was silenced by promises and threats. Venkateshwar Rao's dead body was sent to Masulipatnam for post-mortem examination. The District Medical Officer had issued a post-mortem certificate saying that it was a clear case of murder. No action was taken by the police to book the culprits because the victim was a Communist.

“Four dead bodies were brought by the police to this village, and they reported to the magistrate that there was an 'encounter'. The place from where the so-called Communists opened fire was marshy land. No trace of watery mud was found in the dead bodies nor even on their legs. ...”

“Jasti Raghavayya and Mukkamala Rao who are standing trial before the Special Second Class magistrate, Vijayawada, were on bail. They were regularly attending every hearing. One night, they were taken away by the special police from their respective houses to an unknown destination (and were shot dead.) The sureties reported to the magistrate that the accused were taken by the police. The sub-magistrate passed orders forfeiting the surety bonds for Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 800 respectively.

“Mr. Crombi, the former Deputy District Magistrate of Kistna, had to resign out of sheer disgust. It would appear that he had several reports questioning the correctness of the alleged encounters reported to have taken place between the Communists and the special police force.” (*Crossroads, September 8, 1950.*)

Sri Yellamanchili Nagabhushanam, former Public Prosecutor, in his presidential speech to the Conference of the Madras Civil Liberties' Union, on June 25, 1950, said :

"The situation has deteriorated to an unimaginable extent. Our freedom and our independence are at the mercy of local leaders and of those who have political power in their hands...

"Section 5 of the Madras Suppression of Disorder Act (1948) is proving a terror to one and all. A police officer can open fire on any number of persons. Nobody can raise his voice. The police officer was given protection vide another section... Powers of discretion to shoot were vested in the police officers ... This act places the lives of the common people in the hands of police officers ... Such powers have made some police officer follow in the footsteps of Dyer. The incidents of the days of General Dyer are still in the memories of the people. Those who came out as leaders in those days are today in power and they have given the power to shoot and kill anybody to the police officers. This is atrocious... Our daily press is publishing news to the effect that a clash took place between Communists and the police, that police have... shot dead some Communist subversive elements. As you go on reading and reading such news items, you will come to know the truth behind them... in some cases, rumours are published in the press that Communist Party sympathisers and suspects are taken to unknown and undetectable places and shot dead.

"I am constrained to believe that those in power are creating such a serious situation in order to entrench themselves in power for long."

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Such was the ghastly murder rule of the Congress. And yet, Sardar Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Indian Union, had then made a lying attack on the Communist Party and attributed to it murders, arson, loot. The capable Sardar could do it and put it to the kept press, for malpropaganda, only after he had ordered the closure of the democratic press and gagged all the people's voices, only after banning the Communist Party and all mass organisations, and only after he had clamped down his rule of fascist terror and medieval barbarous regime.

## Withdrawal Of Telangana Armed Partisan Resistance\*

The peasantry and the people of Telangana, since long, had been struggling against the forced labour, illegal exactions, evictions by the feudal landlords, deshmukhs and jagirdars. The struggle was directed against the autocratic regime of the Nizam Nawab of Hyderabad, against the oppression of his bureaucratic officials such as the village patels, patwaris and the other revenue and police officers, and against the suppression of the mother tongue of the Telugu-Marathi-and Kannada-speaking people in the state. There were demands for elementary democratic rights and civil liberties such as the right of freedom of speech, assembly and press, and also for the setting up of a responsible government in the state, in the place of the dictatorial personal rule of the Nizam Nawab.

But this struggle of the Telangana people assumed a different, radical and militant character, when the leadership of the Andhra Mahasabha passed into the hands of the Communist Party and its cadres, during the year 1943. The peasant struggle in Telangana, thereafter, had steadily acquired the character of an agrarian revolt, finally raising the slogans for the abolition of landlordism, for the overthrow of the Nizam's autocratic rule, for the liquidation of the princely state of Hyderabad and for the merger of the different language-speaking peoples into the new states of **Visalandhra**, **Samyukta-Karnataka** and **Maharashtra**. The Telangana peasant struggle which initially began as self-defence with lathis and slings against the goonda attacks of the deshmukhs and Razakars and the atrocities of the police forces of the Nizam Nawab, had culminated in an armed liberation struggle against the princely state of Hyderabad.

The Congress Government which had ordered the entry of the Indian armies into Hyderabad, no doubt, ended the Razakar

\* Taken from "Telangana People's Struggle And Its Lessons" written by P. Sundarayya

menace and also the dynastic rule of the Nizam. But the Union Government not only permitted the hated Nizam Nawab to continue as Rajpramukh, keeping intact the feudal state boundaries of Hyderabad state, but also directed its main attack against the hard won gains of the Telangana peasantry and the Communist Party and Andhra Mahasabha which were leading the heroic Telangana struggle. The destruction of the popular democratic peasant movement and the Communist Party became the principal aim and the immediate task of the Indian Government and its armed forces.

The crucial question that was posed before the fighting Telangana people and the Communist Party that had the privilege of leading the struggle, was whether to continue the armed guerrilla resistance against the attacks of the Indian Union's armed forces, in defence of the peasant's land and other democratic gains, or to surrender arms to the Congress Government's armies and betray the trust placed in our party by the fighting people of Telangana. Were we to abandon the partisan armed resistance and adopt the legal forms of struggle and agitation, permitted by the military rule of the Congress Government in Hyderabad state?

Over this life and death question, two sharply opposed views amongst the leaders of the Communist Party had emerged.

One section of Comrades, whose views were systematically put forth by Ravi Narayana Reddy in his notorious document, *Naked Truth of Telangana*, began advocating the abandonment of partisan armed resistance against the armed attacks of the Indian Union armies, and for the adoption of the open and legal forms of struggle and agitation.

The main arguments of those who advocated the slogan of abandoning the partisan resistance, were the following : (a) a large section of the people, including the rich peasantry and the liberal landlords who were supporting the Telangana armed struggle till the entry of the Indian armies, would turn hostile to the partisan struggle ; (b) the people would be looking upon the armies of the Congress Government as liberators, not as oppressors ; (c) the armed struggle in a small area like Telangana cannot defend and sustain itself, until all-India wide armed

struggles break out, and there were no such possibilities ; (d) our armed squads were either poorly armed or virtually unarmed, and hence could not resist the well-equipped Indian armies and their superior numbers.

The Visalandhra Communist Committee was opposed to this above view-point. It advocated the slogan of armed partisan resistance against the attacks of the Union armies on the gains of the Telangana peasantry. Its arguments were broadly the following :

(a) The big gains of the Telangana peasantry, and in particular the 10 lakhs acres of land that was distributed among the peasantry, had to be defended, and those gains should not be allowed to be snatched away by the class enemies without bitter resistance and fight.

(b) The national and international situation was favourable for the armed partisan struggle, and the Telangana struggle was the beginning of the armed liberation struggle against the bourgeois- landlord Government of the Congress party; the Telangana armed struggle was demonstrating that the Indian revolution was more akin to the Chinese Revolution than to the classical Russian Revolution. To quote as to how exactly this was formulated by the then Andhra Secretariat, in its May 1948 document :

“Our revolution in many respects differs from the classical Russian Revolution, but to a great extent is similar to that of the Chinese Revolution. The perspective likely is not that of a general strike and armed uprising, leading to the liberation of the rural side, but of dogged resistance and prolonged civil war in the form of agrarian revolution, culminating in the capture of political power by the Democratic Front.”

The theses of the Andhra Secretariat stated further :

“Keeping all this in view, in areas where we are a good proportion in the masses, as in certain parts of Andhra, Kerala and Bengal, the time has come to think in terms of guerrilla warfare (Chinese way ) against the military onslaughts of the Nehru Government which is bent upon mercilessly liquidating us.”



(c) The Andhra theses also advocated a united front which included the rich peasantry and the middle bourgeoisie as the allies of the proletariat in the People's Democratic Revolution, and asserted that such a wide front of armed struggle could take shape under the leadership of the Communist Party, and the objective conditions for the materialisation of these aims were rapidly maturing. But a prolonged armed resistance like that of Telangana alone would bring about such favourable conditions.

The polit bureau that was elected at the Second Party Congress had rejected the entire theses of the Andhra Secretariat as gross reformism and launched an attack on the concept of the Chinese path, characterising it as deviation from Marxism-Leninism. The polit bureau maintained that there was only one path. And that was the path of the Russian Revolution, namely, the political general strike and armed workers' uprising in the cities to capture power.

But the polit bureau strongly advocated the slogan of armed resistance in Telangana, as it might hasten the working class general strike and armed uprising, in the anticipated post-war revolutionary crisis.

The Communist Party of India, at its Second Party Congress in February-March, 1948, had raised the slogan, "The Telangana way is our way". It had declared all-out support to the armed struggle of Telangana: it had called for developing similar struggles in several other parts of the country; and it had given a call to develop working class movements in support of the Telangana struggle—all ultimately leading to armed insurrection.

There had been glorious struggles such as the Vayalar-Punnappra struggle in Kerala state ; there were the armed peasant actions in certain areas of West Bengal and Tripura, and the Warli peasant revolt in Bombay. Similarly there had taken place a number of militant peasant struggles in different parts of the country—struggles where some sort of armed clashes had taken place between the peasantry and the police—though none of these struggles had either been sustained or developed in to partisan armed struggles.

The working class which had come out in support of the revolt in the Royal Indian Navy, and for the release of the Indian National Army prisoners during the 1945-47 period, could not be brought into effective action in support of the Telangana peasant armed struggle. There were no solidarity strikes in support of the Telangana struggle, either before the intervention of the Indian Union armies in September 1948 or during the three long years of the Telangana armed resistance till October 1951. The call for general strike of the railway workers on their own specific demands, also had not materialised except in some centres. The Telangana armed struggle alone had had to carry the entire brunt of the offensive let loose by the armed forces of the Indian Government—and that too with the subjectively conceived aim of overthrowing the Nehru Government.

In the international arena, the People's Republic of China had been established, following the final victory of the revolution in October 1949. The people of Vietnam, led by its Communist Party and its beloved leader Ho Chi Minh, were putting up fierce armed resistance against the attacks of the French imperialists who were attempting to reimpose their colonial rule; and they were inflicting powerful blows against the imperialists, though this struggle was exacting tremendous sacrifices from the people of Vietnam. The People's Democratic Republic of Korea, assisted by the huge volunteer army of the Chinese Republic, had rolled back the U.S. and allied armies of aggression to the 37th parallel. The U.S. armies had landed in Taiwan to defend the puppet regime of Chiang Kai-shek. These and similar other revolutionary struggles such as in Burma, Malaya, the Philippines, etc., seemed to be of a very, very protracted nature.

The U.S. imperialists, after succeeding in eliminating the Communists from the newly-established post-war Governments of France and Italy, had set to work to consolidate the monopolist-led regimes, through the launching of plans such as Marshall Aid and drawing these countries into military pacts like NATO.

The Nehru Government had finalised its new Constitution and declared India as the Republic of India, even though the new Indian Republic was made a member of the British

Commonwealth. It was able to politically consolidate its newly-gained power; it had succeeded in merging all the princely states into the Indian Union, though enormous concessions were given to the former Princes and Nawabs. A cease-fire agreement had been concluded in Kashmir, thus easing the Indo-Pakistan relations, which had been strained in the communal massacres and Kashmir war. The tide of the post-war revolutionary wave had definitely receded and the new Congress Government had been successful in tiding over the post-war crisis and the consequent mass upheavals.

We have already shown how a good number of cadres and area committees in the Telangana region were raising their voice of opposition to the continuation of armed partisan resistance against the armies of Indian Union after the 'police action'. We have also stated as to how, due to the newly-bred illusions about the Nehru Government and its promise of a democratic set-up in Hyderabad state, vigilance was slackened, squads were disbanded and arms dumped, all these leading to the large-scale arrests of our party workers and fighting militants.

But because of party loyalty and the sense of discipline to abide by the party line, the line of continuation of the armed guerilla resistance, finally prevailed. Besides the sense of discipline, the return of the hated deshmukhs, landlords, village patels and patwaries, and their frenzied attempts to seize back the peasants' lands, and the terror that was unleashed by them, had roused the indignation of the workers of the Communist Party and the Andhra Mahasabha. These cadres of Telangana began re-organising themselves into squads to resist the armed attacks of the Union military and police.

We have also described, earlier, as to how a number of Andhra Mahasabha cadres of taluk, zonal, area and district level were driven out by the military raids, from the plains areas and thickly populated bases, into the forest belts, for shelter and self-preservation. These comrades, by their dogged and death-defying resistance, were able to strike terror among the landlords, thus preventing these hated exploiters from returning to the villages, and from stabilising their hold on their landed estates and farms.

This armed partisan resistance could not be wiped out, even though the Union Congress Government had deployed 50 thousand armed personnel, spending on an average, ten to fifteen crores of rupees per year. The armed partisans belonging to the Communist Party and Andhra Mahasabha were shedding their blood in this unequal struggle with the far superior armed forces of the Congress Government.

It was quite natural, under these most trying and desperate conditions, that questions were raised as to how long this could continue? Why was it that no other area and in no other state in the Indian Union, similar armed struggle could not be organised to lend support to the Telangana struggle? The leadership of the Telangana armed struggle, under the pressure of the fighting ranks of Telangana on the one hand, and provoked by the brutal repression let loose on the adjoining Andhra districts on the other, had attempted to extend the area of armed guerrilla resistance. But it did not succeed, and the armed police and landlord goondas had resorted to brutal murders of the Communist cadres.

Three hundred comrades were killed. The rest of the militant workers of the party had to be shifted away from these districts either to the forest areas or to some distant places in other states. Thus, a tremendous dislocation of the Party organisation took place, and the problem of what next, faced the leadership of the Visalandhra Committee.

The situation in the rest of the country was no better. The party and the revolutionary movement, faced with the cruel police attacks of the Congress Government on the one hand, and the wrong and sectarian policies pursued by the then all-India leadership on the other, had been extremely weakened and disunited, besides a large number of cadres and leaders been arrested and detained in jails.

It was in such a background, that an editorial appeared in *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy*, sharply critical of the political line that was being pursued by the top leadership of the Indian Communist Party. Following the said editorial and the consequent inner-party discussion and struggle, there took place a drastic reshuffle of the Central Committee and the polit

bureau. A new polit bureau, with C. Rajeswar Rao as the General Secretary, was elected by the reconstituted Central Committee.

The new political line that was worked out by the newly constituted Central Committee and polit bureau was briefly the following :

- Rejection of the programmatic understanding given in the second party congress and subsequently elaborated in what was called the “Tactical Line”.
- Rejection of the thesis of single-stage revolution i.e., the theory of the intertwining of the democratic and socialist stages of the Indian revolution.
- Rejection of the idea that the entire bourgeoisie, including the rich peasantry, had been transformed into the enemies of the people’s democratic revolution.
- Upholding of the concept of the Chinese path for the Indian revolution and advocating the developing of extensive agrarian revolutionary struggles on the pattern of Telangana, wherever conditions permitted.

Let it be mentioned here that there was stiff opposition to this new political line, of course, from an extreme right opportunist angle. The party headquarters in Bombay was made the centre of this new opposition. S. A. Dange, Ajoy Kumar Ghosh and S.V. Ghate had assumed the leadership of this inner-party opposition. While this new opposition was allowed to function legally, the central leadership, as well as the leaders of Telangana armed resistance had to function underground. In short the inner-party situation had very much deteriorated and the party was virtually split into different trends and functions.

The new polit bureau, soon after it was elected, took stock of the grave political-ideological situation of the party, and come to the conclusion that the restoration of the political-ideological and organisational unity inside the Communist Party of India was possible only if it could secure the guidance and assistance of the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the leadership that commanded the highest authority in the world communist movement. The new polit bureau at once approached the leadership of the CPSU and Comrade Stalin,

who readily agreed to render all fraternal assistance in resolving the difficult political-organisational and ideological problems that the Communist Party of India was confronted with.

But the "legal opposition", led by the party headquarters in Bombay continued its disruptive activities, even after knowing that the polit bureau was seeking the help of the CPSU and Comrade Stalin, to resolve the inner-party controversies. The disruption had harmed the partisan armed struggle of Telangana the most, though its immense damage to the party and the mass movement in general cannot be minimised.

A delegation of our party, comprising C. Rajeswar Rao, M. Basavapunniah, Ajoy Kumar Ghosh and S. A. Dange, was deputed to discuss with the leaders of the CPSU and Comrade Stalin, and seek clarification on all the issues that were under controversy inside the CPI. The Central Committee of the CPSU had set a commission, comprising Comrades Stalin, Molotov, Malenkov and Suslov, headed by Comrade Stalin, to assist our party's delegation in this regard.

In this connection, I will have to digress and say a few words regarding the fraternal assistance of the CPSU and Comrade Stalin. So far, we have scrupulously avoided any public mention of these discussions with the leaders of the CPSU and the fraternal criticism and advice given by them, as it might have been utilised by our class enemies to unleash a smear campaign against the CPSU, as well as our party. Since the present leaders of the Right Communist Party such as S. A. Dange and C. Rajeswar Rao, have already been referring to these fraternal discussions and decisions in the open press, and since the name of Stalin is being drawn in by Rajeswar Rao in connection with the Telangana struggle and its lessons, we are left with no option but truthfully state what was the nature of the discussions and what the decisions that our party arrived at, following those discussions.

The issues of controversy related to two separate topics, *namely the first, regarding the class assessment of the transfer of political power to the leaders of the Indian National Congress, the exact stage of the Indian revolution, and the class strategy or*

alliance for the revolution; and the second, about the possible path of the Indian revolution, i.e., whether it was the Russian or Chinese path; what was the nature of the Telangana armed struggle, what were the different phases of partisan peasant armed struggle and how these peasant partisan struggles were not to be equated with the armed struggle for political power, etc. In short, the first concerned the programme of the party and the second dealt with the tactical questions of principle, theory and their concrete application to a concrete situation, and the like.

The main conclusions on the first topic were incorporated in the Draft Programme of the Communist Party of India, first printed and published in April 1951, which was amended and adopted by the All-India Party Conference, held in October 1951, and later by the Madurai Party Congress in 1953. But it was put in abeyance by the Palghat Party Congress in 1956, on the ground that it required some important changes.

The draft published in April 1951 stated : (a) that the new state that came into existence was essentially the same old imperialist state, and the Congress Government was installed in power by the consent of the British imperialists, as it was a Government pledged to the protection and preservation of foreign British capital in India; (b) it rejected the understanding given by the theses of our Second Party Congress which placed the entire bourgeoisie including the rich peasantry, outside the pale of the People's Democratic Front, and visualised the possibility of winning all the Indian bourgeoisie, excepting some individuals and groups among the big bourgeoisie, who might betray ; and (c) it corrected the erroneous theory of the intertwining of two stages of the revolution, though the class alliance it advocated was tantamount to that of the stage of the all-in general united front against imperialism and its feudal allies. This programme of the year 1951 and some of its major propositions were subsequently given up, and a new Party Programme was adopted by our party in 1964, at our Seventh Party Congress. Hence I do not propose to go into a detailed discussion of the merits and demerits of the 1951 Programme.

The present programme of our party definitely lays down that the new state that came into existence after the transfer of power 1947 is a bourgeois-landlord state led by the big bourgeoisie which is allying with feudal and semi-feudal landlordism and collaborating with foreign finance capital, in pursuit of the capitalist path of the development.

The class alliance that our Party Programme advocates for achieving the revolution, comprises of workers, peasants, middle classes and non-big bourgeoisie, directed against the big bourgeois-led State and Government. The core of this People's Democratic Front, of course is the worker-peasant alliance, and its destined leadership rests with the working class and its party. Our revolution at this stage is directed against landlordism, the big bourgeoisie and foreign finance capital.

The stage of the Indian revolution is not socialist, but only People's Democratic which does not aim at liquidation of capitalism as such, but is directed only against the monopoly capitalist and foreign imperialist, besides the liquidation of feudal and semi-feudal landlordism.

The second topic of the discussions concerned the possible path of the Indian revolution and the theory of principles of tactics. This, too, was adopted at the All-India Conference in 1951, and was published under the title "Statement of Policy". The salient extracts from this document are given below. I had also added certain paragraphs (those not within quotes) to clarify the understanding given in these extracts, as arrived at, at that time.

### **India's Path To Revolution**

The replacement of the present bourgeois-landlord state by a people's democratic state is possible only through revolution. As the *Policy Statement* put it:

"There are a large number of people who think that this Government can be replaced by a people's democratic government by utilising the parliament ushered in by the new Constitution. Such feelings are encouraged and fed not only by this Government and the vested interests but even by the right-wing socialists, who preach that the very fact of a strong opposition party on the parliamentary floor will shake the Government and make it topple down.



**“But hardly had the people started to believe in the efficacy of the new Constitution, which they thought was outcome of their anti-imperialist struggles of the past, than even the fiction of the fundamental rights and guarantees is thrown out of that very Constitution and the freedom of person, the press, speech and assembly, which the masses wanted to use to shake up this anti-democratic Government, are subjected to the rule of the police baton and the bureaucrats. Even a liberal would now feel ashamed to maintain; let alone the Communist Party and other democrats and revolutionaries, that this Government and the classes that keep it in power, will ever allow us to carry out a fundamental democratic transformation in the country by parliamentary methods alone. Hence, the road that will led us to freedom and peace, land and bread, as outlined in the programme of the party, has to be found elsewhere.**

**“..... It is the reactionary ruling classes who resort to force and violence against the people and who pose for us the question whether our creed is violence or non-violence. Such a poser is a poser of Gandhian ideology which in practice misleads the masses and is a poser which we must steer clear of. Marxism and history have once for all decided the question for the party and the people of every country in the world long ago. All action of the masses in the defence of their interests to achieve their liberation is sacrosanct. History sanctions all that the people decide to do, to clear the lumberwood of decadence and reaction in their path to progress and freedom.**

**“After the Second Party Congress, differences and controversies arose inside the party about the path that the Indian revolutionary movement must adopt. For a time it was advocated, that the main weapon in our struggle would be the general strike of industrial workers followed by countrywide insurrection, as in Russia. Later, on the basis of a wrong understanding of the lessons of the Chinese Revolution, the thesis was put forward that since our is a semi-colonial country like China, our revolution would develop in the same way as in China, with partisan war of the peasantry, as its main weapon.**

“After long discussion, running into several months, the party has now arrived at a new understanding of the correct path for attaining the freedom of the country and the happiness of the people, a path which we do not and cannot name as either Russian and Chinese. It should be, and is, one that conforms to the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, and that utilises the lessons given by all the struggles of history, especially the Russian and Chinese, the Russian because it was the first socialist revolution in the world carried out by the working class under the leadership of the Communist Party of Lenin and Stalin in a capitalist and imperialist country; and the Chinese because it was the first people’s democratic revolution in a semi-colonial, dependent country under the leadership of the Communist Party, in which even the national bourgeoisie took part. At the same time, one has to remember that every country has its own peculiarities, natural and social, which cannot fail to govern its path to liberation.”

India’s path cannot be the Russian path : since India has essentially an agrarian and backward economy, the immense importance of peasant struggles should not be minimised. So political general strike in the cities and in industrial areas is not the main weapon of our revolution and such a general strike alone will not be enough to unleash countrywide insurrection leading to the overthrow of the present state.

India’s path of revolution cannot be the Chinese path, as had been argued by some, that of partisan war leading to the establishment of liberation areas, and ultimately to liberation of cities, exactly in the same way as it happened in China. So the peasant partisan war would not be the weapon to ensure the victory of the revolution.

“It will be neither only the Russian path nor the Chinese path but a path of Leninism applied to the Indian conditions.”

### **The Difference In The Situation In China And India**

—In China, even to begin with, in 1927 itself, the Communist Party had an army of 30,000; but in India, this is not there.

—“China had no unified and good communications system, which prevented the enemy from carrying out concentrated and

swift attacks on the liberation forces. India is different in this respect from China, in that it has a comparatively more unified, well-organised and far-flung system of communications. So the Indian ruling-classes could easily and swiftly concentrate big forces against guerilla areas and bases."

(India has also a more centralised administration. Capitalism in India has developed far more than in China at the comparable stage of the revolution. India was under a single imperialism while in China different imperialist powers had different spheres of influence, and different warlords were at loggerheads with each other, and could not combine and concrete against the revolutionary bases.)

—"India has a far bigger working class than China had during her march to freedom and it has a role to play which can be decisive in our struggle."

—"The Chinese Red Army was surrounded and threatened with annihilation again and again until it reached Manchuria. There, with the industrial base in hand, and the great friendly Soviet Union in the rear, the Chinese liberation army, free from the possibility of any attack in the rear, rebuilt itself, and launched the final offensive which led it to victory. The geographical situation in India in this respect, is altogether different."

—"This does not mean that there is nothing in common between us and China excepting the stage of our revolution and its main tasks. On the contrary, like China, India is of vast expanses. Like China, India has a vast peasant population. Our revolution, therefore, will have many features in common with the Chinese Revolution. But peasant struggles along the Chinese path alone cannot lead to victory in India."

"Moreover, we must bear in mind that the Chinese Party stuck to the peasant partisan war alone, not out of a principle but out of sheer necessity.....Because it happened so with the Chinese, why make their necessity into a binding principle for us, and fail to bring the working class into practical leadership and action in our liberation struggle?"

For the victory of the Indian revolution, partisan warfare of the peasants has to be combined with the other major weapon,

that of the strikes of the working class, the general strike and uprisings in cities led by the detachments of the working class. The two basic factors of the revolution are—the partisan war of the peasants and the workers' uprising in the cities.

### **Leading Role Of The Working Class And Worker-Peasant Alliance**

“While the previous line of reliance on the general strike in the cities neglected the role of the peasantry, the subsequent one of partisan struggle minimised the role of the working class (whom the peasants consider as their closest friend and ally), which in practice meant depriving the peasantry of its friend and leader. Both lines in practice meant ignoring the task of building the alliance of the working class and the peasantry, as the basis of the united national front, and therefore ignoring the task of building the united national front and ignoring the task of putting the working class at the head of this front in the liberation struggle.

“...The leadership of the working class is not released only through the party and its leadership of the peasant struggle but actually, in deeds, through the working class boldly championing the demands of the peasantry and coming to the assistance of the peasant struggle through its own action. The alliance must function in deed and fact, and not only in theory. The working class is the friend in action, that must help the fighting peasants and must ensure victory over the common enemy.

“The working class, relying on agricultural workers and poor peasants, in farm alliance with the peasantry, together with the whole people, leads the battles in towns and rural areas to liberation, to land and bread, to work and peace.”

The working class can achieve its leading role through direct actions, not only for its demands but also for the demands of all exploited sections and classes, especially the peasantry and by acting as the foremost champion of the general democratic movement.

The party has to win over the majority of the workers in vital industries and build a powerful movement and organisation, based on shop committees.

**“The party has to build the unity of the working class and make it conscious of its tasks in relation to our entire people. The existing split in the working class movement which hampers the development of working class struggles must be overcome at all costs, in the shortest possible time, and united mass organisations of the working class built.**

**“The class has also to be made politically conscious. Only a united and politically conscious working class can fulfil the role of the leadership of the people.**

**“We have to rouse all sections of the peasantry including the rich peasantry, for the struggle for agrarian reform, and in the course of this struggle, rebuild the mass peasant organisations, basing ourselves firmly on the agricultural workers and poor peasants, who together constitute the majority of our agrarian population.”**

**A network of peasant and agricultural worker organisations in the villages, to lead and guide their struggles, are to be built. Volunteer squads of the most militant and conscious elements among them have to be formed to defend the movement against the attacks of the enemy, which may develop into partisan squads as the movement develops onto higher levels.**

**“It must be understood that because of the vast expanse of our country, because of the uneven development of the agrarian crisis and of the working class and peasant movement, and the uneven state of the organisation and consciousness of the peasant masses and the influence of the party, the peasant movement will not develop at the same tempo everywhere, and different forms of organisation and struggle will have to be adopted depending on the maturity of the crisis, the degree of unification of the peasant masses and their mood, the strength and influence of the party, and other factors.**

**“All these tasks call for the most intense, patient and daily work among the masses, continuous agitation on our basic programme and the immediate, simple demands of the people, a concrete working out of such demands for every section of the people according to general and local conditions, practical leadership of mass struggles, a combination of various forms of**

struggles, and a systematic building up of a network of mass organisations.

“Above all, it is necessary to build up through patient struggle a Communist Party equipped with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, a party mastering strategy and tactics, a party practising self-criticism and strict discipline and which is closely linked with the masses.

“The mass organisation and the party that are built up must be able to withstand the fire of repression to which the Government continually subjects them and the people’s movement.” While recruiting the best elements from the working class and other toiling classes into the party and developing it into a mass party, it is necessary at the same time to exercise utmost vigilance against the swamping of the party by elements that are not fully tested and trustworthy.

### **Assessment Of The Immediate Situation And Tasks**

“Some say that the Government is thoroughly discredited and isolated, the people are ready to rise in revolt and in places are clashing with the Government which, with the blatant rule of police firing, has already created conditions of civil war in the country. Hence all our work must be guided by such an understanding of the situation.

“It is true that people are becoming deeply distrustful of the Government and starting to consider it their enemy who is protecting the landlords, moneylenders and other exploiters of the people. Hence the masses are slowly rising in struggle, no longer able to withstand this state of slow starvation and death.” Hundreds of thousands are coming out in actions for their day-to-day demands, for food and adequate wages, for agrarian reforms and fair prices for agricultural produce, etc. But still they believe that the Government can be replaced by a real popular Government through general elections.

“It would be gross exaggeration to say that the country is already on the eve of armed insurrection or revolution, or that civil war is already raging in the country. If we were to read the situation so wrongly, it would lead us into adventurism and giving slogans to the masses out of keeping with the degree of their

understanding and consciousness, and their preparedness, and the Government's isolation. Such slogans would isolate us from the people and hand over the masses to reformist disruptors.

"Equally wrong are they who see only the disunity of the popular forces, only the offensive of reaction, and advocate a policy of retreat in the name of regrouping of forces, of eschewing all militant actions on the plea that this will invite repression. Tactics based on such an understanding of the situation will lead to betrayal of the masses and surrender before the enemy.

"We have to lead the struggle of the people in the context of a sober evaluation of the situation. While it should not lead us into adventurism, we must also not forget that the crisis is not being solved but it is growing. Hence, we cannot take a leisurely attitude and behave as if no deep crisis is moving the people and furious struggles are not looming ahead. Because insurrection and civil war do not exist, some would like to move and work as if they are living in a democracy with rights and liberties and nothing need be done to protect the party and leadership of mass organisations from onslaughts of the law run mad. With such an outlook, we shall get smashed and will be able to build nothing."

The party has to lead the masses in their day-to-day struggles and take them forward step by step, so that the people through their own experience, come to realise the necessity for revolutionary action.

"But because the crisis is growing, and even elementary actions like processions to voice their demands, lead to firing and bring thousands on to the streets, some would like to do away with the daily humdrum of running mass organisations. Taking fascism to be inevitable or already in power, they would scoff at parliamentary elections or fighting for civil liberties, for which broad sections of the people can and should be mobilised."

The party must not preach the inevitability of fascism but utilise the enormous volume of democratic opinion in the country to unite the people to halt the growing drive towards fascism on the part of the present Government. Through patient systematic day-to-day work, through the bold championship of the demands

of the people, through correct leadership of the concrete struggle of all sections of the people, the party will grow and be able to fulfil its role as organiser and leader of the people's democratic movement.

"We have to realise that although the masses are getting fast radicalised and moving into action in many parts of the country, the growth of the mass movement has not kept pace with the growth of discontent against the present Government and its policies and methods. To ascribe this to repression alone would be wrong. This weakness of the mass movement is due, above all, to the weakness of our party and the division in the camp of the progressive forces. The party must strive to overcome this division and must stress the supreme need for unity of all progressive forces, build this unity in action and itself grow into a mass party, by drawing into its fold the best elements from the fighting masses.

"We must fight the parliamentary elections and elections in every sphere where the broad strata of the people can be mobilised and their interests defended. We must be wherever the masses are and would like us to be."

It may be mentioned here the certain parts of the tactical document, including some questions and answers during the discussions between our party's delegation and the Commission of the Central Committee, CPSU, were not included in the "Statement of Policy", as the omitted parts dealt with the elaboration of some theoretical issues and principles, which go more to explain the theoretical-ideological basis for the "Statement of Policy", than forming a part of the same directly. To be truthful to the historical facts regarding the said fraternal discussions and decisions between the representative of our Central Committee and the Central Committee of the CPSU headed by Comrade Stalin, and also to prevent any distortion of the meaning of the "Statement of Policy" by right or left opportunists, I produce below the omitted portions—portions dealing with explanations and questions and answers. The readers, I hope, can easily understand that all these were discussions and decisions in the background of a grave inner-party



crisis, centering round the issues of the Indian revolution, its specific path and the role of different classes and forms of struggle—all thrown up during the Telangana armed struggle during the years of 1948-50. Then alone can the problems discussed be correctly grasped in their historical perspective.

### **Partisan Struggle—A Marxist-Leninist Understanding— Partial Partisan Struggle**

As the crisis matures, as the unity, consciousness and organisation of the masses grow, as the strength and influence of the party develops and as the enemy resorts to more and more ruthless measures to crush the agrarian movement, the question of when, where and how to resort to arms will be more and more forced on to the agenda. As the question is one of immense practical importance, it is absolutely necessary that the party is able to give a clear and unambiguous answer to it.

It must be realised that because of the vast area of India, because of the uneven level of mass consciousness and mass movement in different parts of the country, uneven acuteness of the agrarian crisis and uneven strength and influence of the party itself, the peasant movement cannot develop at the same tempo everywhere. Premature uprisings and adventurist actions of every type must be undoubtedly eschewed. At the same time, it would be wrong to lay down that armed defensive action in the form of partisan warfare should be resorted to in every specific area only when the movement in all parts of the country rises to the level of uprisings. On the contrary, in the course of the development of the movement, the situation may arise in several areas which would demand armed struggle in the form of partisan warfare. For example, in a big and topographically suitable area where the peasant movement has risen to the level of seizure of land and foodgrains, the question as to how to effect that seizure and how to defend the land so seized, will become a burning live question. The party is of the opinion that partisan warfare in such a situation, undertaken on the basis of a genuine mass peasant movement and the firm unity, under the leadership of the party, of the peasant masses, especially the most oppressed and exploited strata, combined with other forms of struggle such

as social boycott of landlords, mass no-rent struggle, agricultural workers' strike, can, if correctly organised and led, have a rousing and galvanising effect on the peasant masses in many other areas, and raise their own struggles to a higher level.

Wherever such partisan struggles develop, they must also be combined with mass actions of the working class, especially in the neighbouring areas, in the form of strikes and demonstrations. Undertaken on the basis of the most careful preparation and assessment of all factors, the partisan struggles must be conducted with the utmost boldness and tenacity, defending the gains of the movement by every means at our disposal.

At the same time, the party has to act with utmost flexibility when overwhelming forces of the enemy are concentrated against the partisan areas and the partisan forces run into danger of defeat and total annihilation.

### **Partisan Struggle As Part Of Liberation Struggle**

Partisan areas will inevitably arise in various parts of the country as the crisis deepens and as the mass peasant movement rises to the level of revolutionary seizure of land and foodgrains, paralysing and wiping out the local forces oppressing them. However they will continuously face the danger of encirclement and annihilation at the hands of the enemy. Even the coming into existence of liberated territories with their own armed forces in several parts of the country, will not eliminate this danger because these areas will themselves be surrounded by hostile forces from all sides. Therefore, partisan war alone, no matter how widely extended, cannot ensure victory over the enemy in the concrete situation prevailing in India.

When the maturing crisis gives rise to partisan struggle on a wide scale, when the partisan forces in several areas are battling against the enemy, the workers in the cities, in the vital industries and especially in the transport system, will have to play a decisive role. The onslaught of the enemy against the partisan forces, against liberated areas, will have to be hampered and paralysed by mass strike actions of the working class. With hundreds of streams of partisan struggles merging with the general strike and uprising of workers in the cities, the enemy will find it

impossible to concentrate his forces anywhere and defeat the revolutionary forces, but will himself face defeat and annihilation. Even inside the armed forces of the Government, the crisis will grow and big sections will join the forces of revolution.

### **Partisan Struggle And Individual Terrorism**

In spite of the offensive nature of the partisan struggle, it is necessary to emphasise in our agitation and propaganda in the initial period, the defensive nature of partisan struggle, saying that the objective of the partisan struggle is above all to defend the peasants from the attacks of the Government and its punitive organs. In doing so, special attention should be paid to the demands for which the peasants are fighting and to the atrocities of the Government which force the peasants to take to arms. It is necessary, at the same time, to point out that it is the Government that is responsible for the violence and bloodshed.

Partisan struggle is frequently confused with individual terrorism. It is asserted that individual terrorism is a part of partisan struggle and not only a part, but even a basis of the partisan struggle. This is absolutely wrong. What is more, individual terrorism contradicts the spirit and objective of partisan struggle. And it is absolutely incompatible with partisan struggle. In the first place, the objective of individual terrorism is to destroy particular individuals while not pursuing the aim of destroying the regime of feudal exploitation and subjugation of the people, whereas the objective of partisan struggle is not to destroy particular individuals, but to destroy the hated regime, in a prolonged struggle of the popular masses. In the second place, individual terrorism is carried out by individual terrorists or by a small squad of terrorists, acting apart from the masses and without any link with the struggle of the masses, whereas the partisan struggle is carried on in close contact with the struggle of the masses against the existing regime.

Since individual terrorism is directed against particular individuals and not against the regime, it creates in the minds of the masses a harmful illusion as if it would be possible to destroy the regime by destroying individual representatives of the regime, that what matters is not the destruction of the regime but the

destruction of the individual representatives of the regime, that the main evil is not the existence of the regime, but the existence of the particular, worst representatives of the regime whom it is precisely necessary to destroy. It is clear that such a feeling created by individual terrorism can only weaken the onslaught of the masses against the regime and thus facilitate the struggle of the Government against the people. Therein lies the first main harm done by individual terrorism to the people's partisan movement.

Since individual terrorism is carried out not by the masses but by individual terrorists acting apart from the masses, individual terrorism leads to an undue minimisation of the role of the mass movement and to equally undue exaggeration of the role of the terrorists, who are alleged to be capable of securing the liberation of the people by their own forces, independent of the growth of the mass partisan movement. It is clear that such a feeling created by individual terrorism can only cultivate passivity among the popular masses and thereby undermine the development of the partisan struggle. Therein lies the second main harm done by individual terrorism to the revolutionary movement.

To sum up : Individual terrorism undermines the possibility of unleashing the partisan struggle of the masses and it should be rejected as harmful and dangerous.

### **Some Questions Relating To Partisan War And Individual Terrorism**

**QUESTION:** Is it correct to resort to partisan war in one particular area where the conditions are ripe for it, even though other rural areas are not ripe for it, and the workers are not ready to support it with mass actions?

**ANSWER:** Yes, you can and should resort to it. To start or not, does not depend on us. It depends on the organisational state of the masses and their mood. If the masses are ready, you must start it.

**QUESTION:** Have we to take up partisan struggle only when the peasant struggle for partial demands reaches the stage of

land distribution and establishing of village peasant committees? Or can we take it up when the movement is still in the stage of struggle for partial demands, for example, rent reduction?

**ANSWER :** The partisan struggle also has stages. It starts with smaller demands—let us say, reduction of rent. It is not yet a partisan struggle. If the enemy refuses to grant the demands and the peasant is eager to win it by force, then partisan struggle can start. True it is not the struggle for seizure of land but only for a reduction of rent, still it will be partisan struggle.

Hence, it does not depend on us. If the masses are ready and eager, we should assist them.

**QUESTION :** Can partisan warfare even of the most elementary type be developed in areas where communications are well-developed?

**ANSWER :** Yes, when encirclement occurs, transfer the best forces to another area. Lead out the armed forces so as to join it with the armed forces in another area, so as to create a liberation army of your own.

**QUESTION :** The aim of the partisan struggle must be liquidation of the enemy's armed forces with the active assistance of the masses of peasants. To kill individual oppressors with a view to terrorising all the other oppressors and making them renounce their oppression is terrorism. But I cannot understand the complete banning of any individual action against any oppressor landlord, notorious official or a spy, as a matter of principle, under the name of terrorism. In my opinion, at times, it becomes necessary in the earlier phase of the partisan struggle, to organise individual actions against some notorious oppressors, not in order to terrorise other oppressors into renouncing their oppression but to guard the safety of the partisan squads. I am unable to understand how such actions make the people passive. As I understand international literature, such individual actions were conducted by partisans against German and Japanese fascists in the occupied countries during the anti-fascist war, and they are being done even now in Asian countries where partisan warfare is going on—Malaya, Burma, Indo-China, etc.

If I remember rightly, such actions were not only not banned by Lenin in his article on partisan warfare but on the other hand, he severely criticised the Mensheviks who condemned them as anarchism. I seek clarification on this point.

ANSWER : The comrade says he cannot understand why individual terrorism should slow down the action of the masses. Individual terrorism is called so not merely because it is directed against individual oppressors but also because it is carried out by individuals or groups irrespective of the masses. Individual terrorism creates the illusion that the main evil is not the regime but individuals; that only if a *few more* are destroyed, the regime will be finished off. What conclusions will the masses draw? That with the help of terrorism of this type, it is possible to destroy the regime after a long struggle. And if such conclusions are drawn by the peasants, they will say, "No use developing the struggle against the regime. Our glorious terrorists will do the job." Such sentiment weakens the onslaught of the masses against the regime. Therefore, it is harmful and dangerous.

Individual terrorism creates the belief that the main force lies in the heroic terrorists and not in the masses. The role of the masses becomes to watch and applaud. That means to cultivate passivity. Marx and Engels taught that the liberation of the masses has to be won by the masses themselves. That is what you ought to tell them. Different results follow from individual terrorism. The masses look to the terrorists as heroes and liberators.

The comrade's reference to Lenin is without foundation. We can give him articles by Lenin directed against individual terrorism. You must know how hard Lenin hit the Mensheviks when the revolution was at an ebb and they took to terror.

The theory of individual terrorism comes to the front when the revolution recedes. It is reflection of the weakness of the movement. Whenever the revolutionary movement is rising and the masses themselves rise, the theory of individual terrorism disappears from the horizon. The comrade must bear that in mind.

## **Telangana Armed Struggle And Its Perspective**

The delegation of our Central Committee, which had the benefit of discussions with the leaders of the Central Committee, CPSU, and Comrade Stalin, did also report to our Central Committee, the gist of its discussions regarding Telangana. The Commission of the CPSU was appreciative of the Telangana armed partisan resistance, which originally began as a peasant movement over certain partial economic demands and finally developed into an armed liberation struggle to overthrow the rule of the Nizam in Hyderabad state. It was to the credit of the Telangana peasantry and the Communist Party that gave leadership to this struggle.

But, after the rule of the Nizam was overthrown by the Indian Union armies in September 1948 and the state of Hyderabad was merged in the Indian Union, it was sectarian and incorrect to continue it as a liberation struggle, against the regime of the Indian Union, for establishing People's Democracy. The correlation of class forces and the obtaining political situation did not permit such a slogan, as a slogan of immediate action.

But it was absolutely correct to defend the gains of the Telangana peasantry through armed partisan struggle when those gains of the peasantry, i.e., land and other democratic liberties, were under attack by the Union Government and its armed forces. It would have been proper and correct to have carried this armed partisan struggle, as a partial struggle for the defence of the peasants' lands, and mobilised the widest democratic support to such a just struggle, while expressing readiness to settle the land question of the Telangana peasantry through negotiations and discussions. That would have strengthened the hands of the fighting people and partisan of Telangana, while isolating the Indian Government which was unjustly attacking the peasants and supporting the feudal landlords. However, the Telangana armed partisan struggle, instead of being fought as a partial struggle for land, was wrongly directed as a liberation war against the Congress regime, and hence did not succeed in securing wider support, to isolate the attacking Indian Government and its armies.

It was also observed that in the then prevailing situation, it was unfortunate that the Telangana armed partisan resistance could not be defended and continued. The time had come to withdraw the armed partisan struggle, and it was for the leadership of the Indian Communist Party, to decide on what terms to withdraw it and negotiate, and how long it had to be continued to secure suitable terms, and when exactly to withdraw the armed resistance, etc. Undue prolongation of the Telangana armed partisan struggle in the absence of mass peasant upsurge in support of the partisan struggle, might raise the danger of its deteriorating into squad or individual terrorism.

### **May 1951 Central Committee Meeting And Its Decisions**

This Central Committee meeting was convened to apprise the Central Committee of the discussions held by our delegation with the leaders of the CPSU and Comrade Stalin, and to take necessary political-organisational decisions. Rajeswar Rao and the polit bureau which was elected in May 1950 had submitted their resignation on the ground that their continuation was not congenial for the reunification of the party, in order to carry out the newly chalked out party line. The polit bureau was reconstituted and Ajoy Kumar Ghosh was elected the General Secretary of the Central Committee.

The May 1951 meeting of the Central Committee, after a thorough discussion of the Telangana situation, adopted a resolution, the full text of which we reproduce below. The Central Committee meeting also decided to ask the Central Committee members from Andhra to go to the areas of armed partisan struggle in Telangana, in order to discuss with the squad leaders and organisers of the local committees, and find out whether they were in a position to continue the partisan resistance until the party was able to bargain favourable terms from the Government for the withdrawal of the armed struggle. The Central Committee was of the view that two basic conditions had to be fulfilled before the decision to withdraw could be taken. They were (a) the land that was in the possession of the peasants should not be taken away to hand them over to the landlords; (b) all warrants and cases against the leaders of the struggle should



be withdrawn and all prisoners released, and the ban on the Communist Party and the Andhra Mahasabha should be lifted.

It was very correct on the part of the Central Committee to decide, that on no serious mass struggles, and especially one like the armed peasant struggle of Telangana, should final decisions be taken without proper consultations and discussions with the direct participants and leaders of the struggle. The Central Committee members from Andhra had met separately to assess the situation anew before they were to go to the areas in Telangana to meet and discuss with the local partisan leaders. Though there were some differences amongst them initially in the matter of further conducting the Telangana struggle, they were able to overcome these differences and go unitedly before the party ranks and the people.

The May 1951 Central Committee meeting, also countermanded the disciplinary action on Ravi Narayan Reddy, expelling him from the party for his clandestine desertion from and underground shelter of the party. But it disapproved of his action of desertion, endangering the safety of other comrades, and also sharply criticised his document *Naked Truth of Telangana* and its circulation—a document that slandered the Telangana armed struggle after September 1948. Ravi Narayan Reddy took his party membership according to the decision of the Central Committee, but continued his anti-Telangana propaganda, contrary to the decisions and directives of the Central Committee.

### **1951 May C. C. Resolution On Telangana**

*(Retranslated from Telugu)*

*(Note : Some papers and some persons are propagating that the Central Committee in its resolution has denounced the Telangana people's movement as terrorism and anarchist. If one goes through the resolution, it becomes crystal clear that this propaganda is utterly baseless and slanderous. We are releasing the full text of the C. C. resolution, to clear the confusion that is being created among the people by the propaganda being indulged in by some newspapers and some persons. —Andhra Provincial Committee)*

In the party, as well as in certain circles which are friendly to the Telangana peasants' struggle, there have arisen certain doubts and questions about the policies and methods that have been adopted during these five years of struggle or are to be adopted.

The Central Committee considers that it is the right and duty of party units and party members from all over India to make their suggestions to the Central Committee about the policies, tactics and methods to be adopted in the Telangana struggle. But the Central Committee wants to emphatically state that it is mainly the people, the people of Telangana, who started this glorious struggle against feudal exploitation, for land and freedom, who carried on this struggle facing untold suffering, that have mainly to decide these issues. The Communist Party of India is proud to declare that it is standing hand in hand with the Telangana people who were heroically carrying on the fight against exploitation and that the party is leading this struggle. The Communist Party, unlike the Congress party, is not a party that, irrespective of people's opinions and close cooperation and consent, can initiate any struggle, or continue, restrict or withdraw it.

During the last three years, all progressive forces in our country have realised that the boastful claims that the Indian Union army's action was intended only to end the hated Nizam's feudal rule and to usher in democratic rule, are utterly false. Through hundreds of meetings, demonstrations, memoranda, they demanded and forced the Government to stay the hangings of the 12 Telangana heroes and commute their death sentences. The selfish reactionaries who were behind the Indian Government, were effectively able to prevent land reforms being enacted, abolishing feudal landlordism, giving land to the tiller and thus solving the people's food problem.

In this situation, to defend the Telangana people's movement; to defend the land in the possession of the lakhs of agricultural labourers and the peasants; to defend their right to reduced rates of interest and of rent; to defend their freedom from forced labour and forced levies—all these won by their heroic struggles—is the real way for achieving agrarian reforms, and not by giving paper promises.

At the same time, the Central Committee declares that it is ready to arrive at an agreement through negotiations, to solve this problem, to safeguard and to defend the interests of the people and of the peasants of Telangana, and to restore peaceful conditions.

Some circles believe that the Telangana struggle was being carried on to overthrow the Nehru Government. But these circles forget that the Telangana peasantry, as early as in 1946, long before the Nehru Government was established, was carrying on a struggle against the Nizam and feudal landlord exploitation. The Nehru Government armies, which entered on the plea of ending Nizam's rule, joined hand-in-glove with the Nizam, and brought back the landlords. The same struggle in defence of the peasants' interests against the landlords is being carried on even after the establishment of the Nehru Government. So it is necessary to clarify that the Telangana struggle was not started, nor is it being continued, to overthrow Nehru's Government but only to end the feudal exploitation. Everybody desiring progressive development of the country agrees that it is necessary to struggle to end feudal landlord exploitation. Because it is on the success of that struggle that everyone can be assured of his daily food, daily work for livelihood, progress and freedom.

Keeping this in view, (1) the Central Committee directs the polit bureau to review the Telangana problem and adopt all ways and measures to make the Telangana struggle successful.

2) It appeals to all party members and party units to popularise the demands of the Telangana peasants and to mobilise the people, workers and peasants, against the atrocities and repression that are rampant in Telangana.

3) It appeals to all democratic forces and elements to raise their voice and to defend the Telangana people from the military attack and atrocities.

4) It appeals to all to mobilise the people in support of the following demands of the Telangana peasants.

### **Demands**

—All the lands that are being cultivated by the agricultural labourers and the peasants must not be disturbed and their possession by ownership (patta) rights must be confirmed. No

peasant and agricultural labourer cultivating land should be evicted from the land he has been cultivating. The lands forcibly seized from the peasants should be restored to them.

—People living in the forest areas must be free to utilise the forest produce, freely, for their own personal use and for sale. They must be allowed to freely cultivate the lands in the forests, under the supervision of their elected panchayats.

—All village affairs should be conducted by the panchayats elected by all men and women.

—Withdrawal of all the armed personnel and disbanding of the Home Guards.

—Release of the convicted and detained political prisoners, all those connected with the Telangana movement. Withdrawal of all pending cases and warrants. Cancellation of all collective fines.

—Withdrawal of the ban on the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party. Restoration of civil liberties.

—The question of abolishing the Nizam dynasty's rule as well as the Hyderabad state, and its merger into the united Andhra, Maharashtra and Karnataka linguistic states, to be left to be decided by a Constituent Assembly elected by adult franchise of the people of Hyderabad state.

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But this resolution as well as the change of central leadership of the party was taken as a green signal for a full-fledged campaign by the Ravi Narayan Reddy section in Telangana, and by the Open Party Headquarters Forum section on an all-India scale, in favour of total and unconditional withdrawal of the Telangana struggle and to eliminate the fighting cadre from the leadership at all levels. They had started a campaign that Central Committee had already withdrawn the struggle. Only the Andhra leaders (the Bezvada clique) were persisting in carrying on the struggle. The struggle was nothing more than individual terrorism and anarchist deeds.

The Party Headquarters Open Forum and the group formed by Ravi Narayan Reddy to denounce the Telangana armed struggle after the entry of the Indian army had been systematically

carrying on propaganda that both the all-India leadership and the Andhra leadership had adopted this terroristic method of revolution, guerrilla struggle with small squads, at the instance of the Yugoslav delegation that attended the Second Congress of the Communist Party of India, in February 1948. O. P. Sangal, a follower of P. C. Joshi then, was the propagator of this slander. It is as much a dirty slander as that of the Indian Government that the Communists joined hands with the Razakars. For the enemies of the revolutionary struggle any stick is good enough to beat the Communists with.

In Telangana itself, the Hyderabad city group, Sri Ravi Narayan Reddy group and some of the Telangana leaders released from jail, held a conference and formed a Preparatory Committee and announced withdrawal of the Telangana struggle, and decided for participating in the forthcoming elections.

The polit bureau, under the pressure of the mounting all-India campaign of this group for open withdrawal of the struggle, announced a negotiating committee with the Government for withdrawal of the struggle. The All-India Kisan Sabha called for the withdrawal of the struggle. Ajoy Kumar Ghosh threatened that unless the Telangana struggle was withdrawn immediately, he would be forced to issue a statement disowning it. Maddukuri Chandrasekhara Rao, who was then Secretary of the Andhra Committee, had to retort to him that in that case, they, the leaders of the Telangana movement, would be forced to disown him and his leadership—which threat kept him in check. The leaders heading the Telangana movement trekked long distances into the forest areas to explain the new understanding and sound out the squads on whether they would be able to continue till the minimum guarantee for the Telangana fighters' safety and the guarantee of land that still was in the hands of the peasants, could be extracted from the Government. Some of them could return only by September end.

Meanwhile more arrests had taken place in Hyderabad city and more of the underground shelters were blown up. Many of the leaders in jail openly started saying that they were for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the struggle. After such declarations they were released and joined vociferously in

the campaign demanding the withdrawal. But the Government of India told the negotiating committee and the intermediaries that there was no use of these declarations unless the fighting committee headed by the "Bezwada clique" announced withdrawal. The hunt for the guerrilla squads was continued relentlessly. Meanwhile the Karimnagar-Adilabad area committee and the Palvancha area committee, too, called for withdrawal.

Another important factor to be noted was, that with the general elections nearing, the Congress and legal People's Democratic Front cadres had gone to the Telangana villages and started campaigning. They started saying that if our guerrillas gave up their actions, even here in Telangana, the police camps would be removed, our squads and leaders would be allowed to come back to the villages and be allowed to participate in the elections. We would vote for the party and defeat the Congress. These constant raids and beatings would end.

In the Andhra area, as early as June-July, the cadres were released from jails. They started preparing for the elections. Comrade A. K. Gopalan toured the villages, denouncing police repression and demanding withdrawal of the arrest warrants against the leaders. Red flags started fluttering in hundreds of villages. In that situation, the Andhra Provincial Committee, which was also leading the Telangana armed struggle, allowed them to go in for participating in the elections. Members and squad leaders from Andhra who had been fighting in the forest region of Krishna along with the Telangana guerrilla-squads, left the areas and went back to Andhra to participate in the elections.

The leadership of the Telangana armed struggle then consisted of Rajeswar Rao, M. Basavapunniah, Maddukuri Chandrasekhar Rao, P. Sundarayya, Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao (D. V.), and Bheemireddi Narasimha Reddi (B.N.)

D. Venkateswara Rao, after attending the Central Committee meeting, accepted the new understanding and gave his consent for withdrawal, and went to the Godavari forest area in June 1951 to meet the guerrillas and explain the new understanding

and the decision of the new Central Committee. Comrade B. Narasimha Reddi had gone to the same forest region even earlier in March 1951. Comrade P. Sundarayya had gone to Amarabad forest region and returned.

On October 20, except these two, the other four comrades met and anxiously debated for long, coming to the conclusion that under these conditions, there was no possibility of getting even the minimum terms and any further continuation would put the fighting cadres and squads into greater danger. It was better to withdraw unconditionally, taking the Government at its word that amnesty for cadres, and assurance of land for the peasant, would come after the withdrawal.

### **The Factors That Led To This Decision**

Even during the Central Committee discussions in May 1951, the Central Committee members who were in the leadership of the Telangana movement, in spite of initial differences expressed by some, had agreed that the Telangana armed struggle, even as partial partisan struggle in defence of land, could not be continued for long and should be withdrawn, getting the most favourable terms possible. The factors that made them come to this conclusion were :

First and foremost was the factor that in the very bastions of the Telangana movement, Nalgonda, Khamma, Warangal districts, in all the plains areas, the mass participation had become less and less, though the mass sympathies were with the fighting guerrillas. Party and Andhra Mahasabha organisers, guerrilla squads, all were forced to leave that area and retreat to the distant forest areas. Raids from the forest bases by the guerrilla squads, the help they received from the people in their actions against landlords and enemy agents, prevented the landlords and the Government from stabilising their rule, and restoring a "normal situation", i.e., landlord exploitation. But these could never overcome the failure of the masses not participating or their lessening participation in actual struggles.

If one compares this with the mass participation during 1947-48 against the Nizam and his Razakars, and even for

a period following the Indian army intervention, or of the first spontaneous mass upsurge and response in the newly extended areas in late 1949 and early 1950, this factor of lessening mass participation becomes quite patent.

In the new areas, to where party and Sangham organisers and guerrilla squads had retreated and roused the masses, in the initial stages the masses had responded, as in the Koya tribal belt, or near the Mahbubnagar forest region, and more spectacularly in Karimnagar district. But when the Government sent its military and police and established camps, this first spontaneous mass response subsided. Once again, squad actions had become the main form of resistance. In the Godavari forest region, we had seen how the whole Koya population was physically uprooted from the forest belt to the concentration camps on the outskirts of the forests.

The second factor was that the guerrilla squads, faced with an increasing network of military and police camps, and with less and less mass participation, had become less and less effective in their actions on their enemy's armed personnel, the military, the police and the armed Home-Guards. Apart from the protective forest areas—and there too—as the enemy increased its camps and fire power—in all areas, the actions against the armed personnel had become fewer and fewer.

Squad actions were being directed more and more against individual enemy agents and individual landlords. And if the armed struggle was continued, the danger of the whole thing deteriorating into individual terrorism was quite evident. If the main action is not against the armed forces of the ruling classes but against individual landlords and their agents, one of the essential features of the partial partisan guerrilla movement is lost.

The fire-power of the guerilla and their military skill, as against the armed forces of the ruling classes, instead of increasing both in quantity and effectiveness, had become weaker.

Thirdly, while the peasants held possession of a greater portion of *anyakrantalu*, leased land, and practically the whole of the waste land brought under cultivation, they had lost possession of most of the surplus land seized. Even on the lands in their



possession, they were forced to pay rent, though in many cases, it might be very small and even token. These could not be recovered or continue to be defended by armed defence for much longer.

Fourthly, the ruling classes in the whole country had strengthened their position, having overcome the initial enormous difficulties that they had faced immediately after the transfer of power. The high tide of the post-war mass upsurge had been ebbing rapidly, as was evidenced by the fact that in no part of the country, neither Telangana-like movements were going on nor even mass struggles of the 1947-48 intensity and character. There were also no important solidarity actions and aid campaigns in defence of the Telangana struggle, in the rest of the country.

Fifthly, in the difficult situation facing the Telangana movement, and in the face of the unimaginable military and police torture and terror, sharp differences in the leadership once again had come up as to the future conduct of the movement. The most notorious example of this had been Ravi Narayan Reddy's stealthy desertion of his underground shelter and his joining of the Open Forum of the Party Headquarters at Bombay in its public slander campaign against the Telangana movement. The whole political and tactical line that was being pursued by the new polit bureau elected in May 1950 was under attack by the Ajoy-Dange-Ghate leadership from Bombay, the legal party headquarters.

Sixthly, in the fighting areas, among guerrilla leaders themselves, differences started accumulating and desertions began, even from amongst squad and centre organisers. This took a serious turn when a small group headed by Dayam Rajireddi in Manukota-Illendu area, tried to organise a revolt, and failing he and a few others deserted to the enemy. That was a serious warning signal.

Finally, with the clear understanding obtained about the need to distinguish between partial partisan struggles and partisan warfare as part of a liberation struggle, it had been easier for the leaders of the Telangana movements to chalk out the future course of tactics regarding Telangana.

We should have realised that the Telangana armed struggle which had developed and was being waged as a liberation struggle against the Nizam, was no more a liberation struggle when the Indian army intervened and Hyderabad state became a part of the Indian state. It had become a peasant partisan armed struggle to defend the possession of the land which was in the hands of the peasants, i.e. a partial partisan struggle. Then, we would have, while conducting the armed defence, adopted quite flexible tactics to achieve as many concessions as possible, worked for settlement, and fared far better, retreating in time.

We had carried on the armed defence to breaking point.

These were the factors that made the Central Committee members who were heading the Telangana movement. Agree to the Central Committee resolution of May 1951. Our hope and ardent desire was that the whole party would unitedly defend and stand by the Telangana struggle and try to get those minimum terms which would enable withdrawal of the armed struggle, retaining the maximum gains that were possible at that time and in that situation.

But the development of events after the Central Committee resolution, narrated above, dashed whatever prospects there were for achieving this, and hence the inevitable decision for unconditional withdrawal.

The resolutions passed at the Amarabad Regional Communists' and Guerrillas' Conference on November 21, 1951, endorsing this decision, correctly reflect this situation and we are giving them below :

### **Resolution On Withdrawal Of Armed Struggle**

For the last five years the Telangana people have been waging an armed struggle, under the leadership of the Andhra Mahasabha and the Communist Party, against the Nizam Nawab and the landlords, for land and for national freedom. When the Nizam Nawab's regime was about to collapse, the armies of the Congress Government entered Hyderabad, on the plea of putting an end to the Nizam Razakars, but in reality engaged in destroying the gains of the Telangana people. They kept the Nizam Nawab as Rajpramukh. They started seizing lands from the Telangana

peasantry and handing over their possession to the deshmukhs and the landlords.

The Telangana people, under the leadership of their party, resisted the Nehru army's attacks and defended their lands. During the last 3 years, even though Nehru's armies subjected hundreds of thousands of people to brutal tortures, raped thousands of women, burnt village after village, forced tribal people to vacate their villages and put them in concentration camps (new settlement villages outside the forests, with military guard all round), shot dead about 2,000 guerrillas, party and people's leaders, and the militant supporters of the party, the Telangana people were able to defend and retain many of their gains!

—They have retained possession of an overwhelming portion of the leased land and continue to cultivate it.

—They have retained some portion of the surplus lands of the big landlords, which they had occupied, though a major portion was snatched back by these big landlords with military and police help. But even these lands which the big landlords seized could not all be cultivated, a large portion of it is being kept as waste and uncultivated land.

—The Telangana peasants were cultivating and enjoying the fruit of all the waste lands, poromboke, banjar or forest reserve lands.

—They were enjoying the forest produce free.

—They were free from the oppressive day-to-day rule and action of patels and patwaris and forest guards.

—They stopped forced labour being extracted by the landlords.

The big landlords could not dare stay in the village and had run to the towns and to the police camps, and were economically in a far weakened position.

Five years of armed guerrilla struggle carried on by the Telangana people, made them tremendously conscious and determined to stand up for their rights, and for a new life.

The Andhra Mahasabha had become the organisation (united front) of the Telangana people, and the Communist Party has become the Telangana people's party, winning their love and confidence.

The Telangana peasant armed guerrilla struggle has shown to all the people of India, in practice, a new way of how to fight for land, for food and for real freedom.

The Telangana people's struggle has helped to expose the real character of Nehru's Congress Government on a world scale, and won the appreciation of the progressive peoples of the world.

The Nehru Government felt that it could not wipe out the Telangana people's armed resistance and if it continued further, they were afraid that many Telangana might arise in several parts of India. They decided to carry on negotiations, so as to get the Telangana armed struggle withdrawn, and prepared to concede certain concessions.

But in the Telangana people's struggle, in conducting it, there remained some mistakes :

The Telangana peasantry was fighting for land, for the national unity of the Andhra people and for their freedom against the Nizam Nawab. But we wrongly construed it as the beginning of the people's armed struggle for liberation, which has to be an all-India struggle, to overthrow Nehru's Congress Government. Because of this error, we were unable to counteract Nehru's propaganda in time, and mobilise all democratic sections of India in support of the Telangana people's struggle and just demands.

We failed to build up the necessary secret mass organisations, and secret party organisation, that could maintain day-to-day unbroken contact with the people, under whatever repression and terror, which was essential for any serious people's struggle. Because of this, we were unable to mobilise the people to participate more and more in the struggle against Nehru's army, in defence of their gains and demands.

Our guerrilla attacks were mainly directed, not against the armed personnel of the Government but tended to be against the Government agents, the landlords and other enemies of the people.

We failed to develop sufficiently rapidly the military skill of the guerrillas and also political and theoretical level of the Party members and organisers.

Under these conditions, the party decided to withdraw guerrilla actions, if the peasants were not evicted from the lands, and if

all those political prisoners connected with the Telangana people's struggle were released, all arrest warrants were withdrawn; all cases pending against them were withdrawn, the ban on the Communist Party and the Andhra Mahasabha was removed, the military and other armed personnel were withdrawn and civil liberties were restored. We thought using such respite and utilising these opportunities, we could overcome our weaknesses and could carry the Telangana people's movement to a new high level, and strengthen it many times more with new tactics.

But, the inner-party discussions that plagued the party during the last two years, have caused irreparable harm to the Telangana peasant armed struggle. Wrong arguments and propaganda were carried on that the Telangana people's movement was nothing but individual terrorism or squad actions, and that the people were not participating in it.

The Central Committee passed a resolution on the basis of the new Party Programme and new tactical line. But in complete contradiction to it, the polit bureau issued an open public statement condemning individual terror and squad actions. It helped only the above-mentioned slander campaign and caused only harm to the Telangana cause.

Releasing to the press that portion of the Central Committee resolution, that we were ready for negotiated settlement, led the Government to consider that we were on our last legs and were ready to surrender, and so stiffened its attitude.

V. D. Deshpande (Marathwada Communist leader) went to the Home and Police Minister Seshadri Ayyangar of the Hyderabad Government and denounced the whole Telangana movement as terrorism. In Telangana, under the leadership of Ravi Narayan Reddy, V. D. Deshpande and Arutla Lakshmi Narasimha Reddy, a rival party group, calling itself the Convention Group, started functioning. Some of those of the Convention Group and some of the detenus in jails, had told Vellodi, the Chief Administrator of the state, that they were ready to withdraw the struggle, and for a compromise. The Central Kisan Council (under the leadership of Z. A. Ahmed) and the

All-Hyderabad Kisan Committee (under the leadership of Arutla Lakshmi Narasimha Reddy) passed resolutions condemning the Telangana movement as individual terrorism. All these helped the Government to feel that they were on top and could afford to be adamant.

As for the Central Committee resolution, a solidarity campaign supporting the demands of the Telangana people could not be carried on, in the whole of India, except in Andhra.

Under these circumstances, with our weaknesses on the one hand, and on the other hand, with increasing differences and split in the party, though we were unable to get the minimum conditions from the Government we had expected, we were forced to adopt new tactics to defend the gains of the Telangana people's struggle and to carry it forward. For this purpose, the decision to stop guerrilla actions, taken by the Provincial Committee, is endorsed by this meeting.

In the same manner and with the same skill with which one has to lead the movement when it is surging forward, one has to retreat boldly taking the initiative and adopting necessary steps, when unfavourable conditions force one to beat a retreat. We need not despair because of this retreat. On the basis of our experience of the movement, on the basis of our deep roots among the people, on the basis of the new Programme and new tactical line, we are confident that we will overcome the weaknesses in the Telangana movement and develop the Telangana people's movement many times more powerfully by winning national unity and freedom. We swear that we will carry out our part in the people's democratic movement in India !

### **On Protection Of Cadre**

During the last five years of the Telangana guerrilla struggle, those experienced cadres who underwent many trials and tribulations, who now in the field number about 650, including 233 in this region—all these are the priceless capital of our movement. It is absolutely essential to take all necessary steps to protect and preserve these cadres.

As per the new tactics, we have to dissolve the guerrilla squads, regroup them into political squads and function them as such. While the Government continues to ban our Sangham and our party, and continues to wipe out our cadre, our squads and cadre face a great threat from the enemy. So it is necessary to give the necessary instruments to them for self-defence. We must re-organise the squads, mixing judiciously the military and political squad members, so as to enable them to effectively carry out political and organisational responsibilities.

These squads have to take every technical precaution, while carrying out their programme. If the police or the landlord goondas come to apprehend them, they must take every appropriate measure for self-defence and protection.

The cadre will be facing a serious food problem. For this, they must depend entirely on the people, collect free donations in every form from the people, and maintain themselves. In future, as the repression becomes less and the scope for going back to the villages and settling and working there increases, then the cadre have to go back to the villages and live among the people as part of them, earn their livelihood and work with them.

Meanwhile, we must safeguard our secret centres existing in the forests as well as in the villages. We must continue to use them, for the shelter of our cadre and leaders, as well as the office centres to carry on our work. For this purpose, all the necessary efforts and precautions must be continued as before.

We must not recruit persons into the squads as before, but keep the developing conscious cadre in the village organisation and develop their work and political level.

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**The decision to withdraw the Telangana armed struggle was released to the public and the press and was broadcast by the radio on October 21, 1951.**

### **Development Of Events After The Withdrawal**

Comrade P. Sundarayya went to Amarabad forest region again and attended the conference of party and guerrilla fighters held there in the third week of November and explained the decision

of withdrawal and the future programme. The conference passed a resolution on martyrs and greeted the Soviet Union. After that the conference passed resolutions approving the decision of withdrawal of struggle; on how to protect cadre; on the land question; on grain levies, on food, on agricultural labour problems; on the peace movement; on the forthcoming elections; on the organisation of People's Democratic Front and the party.

Rajeswar Rao and Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao went to Warangal-Khammam forest areas and explained the decision.

The underground party leadership announced a reconstituted committee for Telangana of about 25 members consisting of both the underground cadre as well as those who were released and those who were in jail, and a small committee as the executive, of those who were available outside and of the leading cadre from the Provincial Committee available in Hyderabad city for taking day-to-day decisions regarding elections, and for taking all other necessary steps for safeguarding the cadre and the movement after the withdrawal. The legal comrades refused to cooperate.

Ajoy Kumar Ghosh, then, without consulting the underground state leadership, constituted an "Election Committee" but authorised it to function as the *de facto* State Committee. The underground committee sent a circular to ignore this committee except for election purposes, and continued to guide the underground cadre while the "Election Committee" was able to get the acceptance and cooperation from the open cadre. The underground cadre worked hard for the success of PDF candidates, as the Communist Party could not set up candidates in its own name as the ban on it had not yet been withdrawn.

The landlords had not yet returned to the villages, and could not establish their authority. The people were free to vote. They voted PDF candidates in thumping majorities and the Congress lost many deposits. In the Nalgonda, Khammam, Warangal and Karimnagar districts, the PDF won all the seats except four, and in the whole of Telangana, 40 PDF and 10 Socialist and Scheduled Castes Federation candidates supported by the PDF of a total of 100 candidates, won. Well-known Congress leaders



were defeated. Seven out of 14 Lok Sabha seats were also won by PDF candidates.

These successes in the elections in Telangana and a similar electoral success (though less spectacular) in the Andhra area proved the utter baselessness of the campaign that was carried on by the other section that the party had ruined the whole mass movement and was isolated from the people because of its sectarianism, and the anarchist and individual terroristic movement! In fact, out of 29 members of the Communist Parliamentary Group, 19 were from Andhra Pradesh. These victories made the Andhra leadership once again take its due place in the all-India leadership.

About 25 leading and important comrades of Telangana from the fighting areas as well as those who were open, held a prolonged meeting for a week in February 1952. They discussed all the problems that were dividing the cadre; Ajoy Kumar Ghosh as the General Secretary of the party attended it and guided it. He summed up the agreed conclusions, and a united Telangana Committee was formed to lead the Telangana movement. Comrade P. Sundarayya was the Secretary. Comrade M. Basavapunnaiah, Ravi Narayan Reddy, Baddam Yellareddi, Maqdoom, Devulapalli Venkateshwar Rao, Bhimireddi Natasimha Reddy(?) were the other members of the Secretariat. If on any issue, differences persisted, decisions were to be taken by two-thirds majority. Our anxiety for unity was so great that even this principle was accepted!

During 1952, after the elections were held, most of the leading cadre came out open, yet the hunt against underground squads and cadre continued. There were cases where the police hunted our cadre and killed a few. Arrests and prosecutions continued. Heavy sentences were being given. The Government when asked to fulfil its promise of withdrawing cases and warrants, releasing the arrested and convicted comrades, used to put up the argument that the guerrillas had not surrendered arms. And as long as the arms were not surrendered, they could not relax their hunt ! Then the Telangana Committee met and decided unanimously to surrender the arms, as they did not serve and purpose then, and

was only giving an excuse to the Government to pursue its vendetta. And in future, if once again, the people had to take up arms, it would be quite easy to gather them as in the past without relying on these out-moded fire-arms. The party handed over the arms at specified places.

To this decision of surrendering arms, Devulapalli Venkateswar Rao was also a willing party. But in 1969, when he has become a full-fledged Naxalite leader, he condemns the withdrawal of the struggle and surrender of arms as the greatest betrayal. According to him, even if the Telangana struggle was withdrawn, only if the arms were not surrendered, the course of events would have been different ! Queer logic!!

Let me here itself make it absolutely clear that the Chinese Party at no time, during all the years from 1951 to 1967 ever said that the withdrawal of the Telangana movement was wrong, though they could have conveyed it on innumerable occasions when we had the opportunity to meet them personally. Once when we said in a mood of self-criticism that if we had the correct understanding we could have retreated with much less losses and with greater gains, they told us not to stress that aspect but bring forth the revolutionary significance of the fact that the Nehru Government could not suppress a peasant partisan struggle even in a small part of the country.

### **The Differences Persisted**

1. Though Ajoy Kumar Ghosh concluded that the continuation of the armed struggle to defend the possession of the lands of the peasantry after the Indian army intervention was correct, and not having continued it would have been considered as betrayal by the peasantry, Ravi Narayan Reddy's group refused to accept this position and carried on their own propaganda that it was wrong to have continued the armed struggle.

2. They were opposed to the formation of the Vishalandhra Committee, as a leading committee of both the Andhra and Telangana areas, with each region having a separate regional committee subordinate to it. They insisted that both these should be directly led by the Central Committee, the Vishalandhra Committee could be only a forum to exchange opinions on common issues.

3. They were opposed to developing the Andhra Mahasabha as the united front of all democratic forces in Telangana, and wanted the PDF to be such an organisation for the whole of Hyderabad state. In fact, they wanted to develop the PDF as the party, while relegating the building of the Communist Party to the background. Every mass activity was to be undertaken on behalf of the PDF.

4. They were opposed to forming party committees at various levels, with the underground cadre occupying their due place. They dubbed these underground cadres as “sectarians” and armed-struggle-wallahs and so were to be eliminated, but on the ostensible plea that meetings of underground and open cadres were difficult to organise. They did not help the rehabilitation of the underground cadre or of their functioning.

5. They did neither grasp the disruptive character of the Mulki movement, nor fight vigorously against it. The Mulki movement was roused by the reactionaries in Telangana in 1952. The landlords, reactionary Government officials, Marwari businessmen, who, in the name of fighting the domination of outsiders, of persons coming from the Andhra region, were out to disrupt the democratic movement.

6. They started to seek compromises with landlords to settle disputes, many against the interests of the peasants instead of boldly leading militant resistance to the efforts of the landlords to evict the peasants from the lands they were in possession of and were cultivating.

“.....The most important difference is on the question of how to fight back the efforts of the Congress Government and the landlords to evict the peasants from the lands they are cultivating. It is on this issue that the sharpest differences have arisen in all places, and they become a daily feature, between Ravi Narayan Reddy's group and the legal cadre on the one side and the underground cadre on the other. Whatever they may say before the Central Committee, in practice, their actions are in favour of the landlords. Their attitude is not one of mobilising the people and safeguarding the possession of lands; but somehow or other arrive at compromises with the landlords—this is our firm

opinion. The opinion of the Central Committee is also the same. Though there are certain sectarian attitudes among the underground cadre, the main deviation on the land question is one of right reformism—this is the agreed Central Committee opinion. In the daily functioning, on the most important issues of the peasantry, when there are serious differences (it is surprising that Rajeswar Rao does not realise it), without discussing these differences in the Party Committees, Ravi Narayan Reddy's and Ella Reddy's group carried on totally wrong propaganda that the underground cadres were carrying on their adventuristic activities." (P. Sundarayya's letter in 1953, "On Our Differences")

Ultimately, seeing that the Andhra Committee leadership, with Rajeswar Rao as the Secretary, was not prepared to fight these disruptive policies, and also seeing that the Central Committee, though politically upholding the viewpoint of the fighting underground cadre, was not prepared to enforce or even give their decisions in writing, and seeing that the Telangana and Andhra Committees started functioning separately, Comrades P. Sundarayya and M. Basavapunniah went back to the Andhra area. It was only again, after 1956, when Andhra Pradesh was formed that a united Party Committee came into existence.

## **Punnapra-Vayalar And Telangana\***

**E.M.S. Namboodiripad**

The struggles in Punnapra- Vayalar in Travancore and in Telangana in Hyderabad represented the highest form of the post-war revolutionary struggles. In many respects, these struggles were similar in nature. For example, both Travancore and Hyderabad were princely states and in both the states agitations for responsible government were making great strides. In both the states there was a developed Communist Party. The princely rulers of both the states were striving to safeguard their status in the background of the discussions being held among the representatives of the British government, the Congress and the League. The Communist Party which had been playing a decisive role in developing popular agitations against these manoeuvres had been able to enhance its influence among the non-Communist democrats in both the states.

In many other respects these struggles were also dissimilar. In Travancore, the ruler and a majority of the population were Hindus whereas in Hyderabad the ruler was a Muslim and a majority of the population were Hindus. The Muslim League had been trying to include Hyderabad in Pakistan in the event of Indian partition. Whether it joined Pakistan or it was maintained as an independent state, a state of Hyderabad which was not part of India would constitute a danger to the security of India. Therefore, the Congress wanted to make Hyderabad a part of India. That is, Hyderabad occupied a vital place in the conflicts between the Congress and the League. As for Travancore, there was no question of joining Pakistan. But the rulers declared their intention to remain an 'independent' country. Based on this, an "Independent Travancore" movement had come into existence there. Besides, in place of the democratic demand of a responsible government in the sense that it should be responsible to an elected legislature, the rulers of Travancore raised the issue of

*\* Excerpts from : "A History of Indian Freedom Struggle" written by E. M.S Namboodiripad, pages 514 - 517*

establishing a constitutional system with a government not responsible to a legislature which may be an elected one. Since the contemplated system was on the model of the presidential system of America, it was named "American Model".

If the contemplated system of "Independent Travancore" in the "American Model" was to come into force, it would be extremely dangerous to the entire bourgeois democratic movement, for the "American Model" was a negotiation of the democratic objective which the freedom movement had been upholding from its very inception. In addition, the existence of an independent country with a long sea coast at one end of India would bring danger to India's security. Therefore a state-wide agitation raged against the ideas of 'Independent Travancore,' and 'American Model' with the Communist Party in the forefront.

Another factor which distinguished Travancore from Hyderabad relates to the social organisations and class relations existing in the two states. In Travancore, there was a fairly organised working class. Right from the agitations for responsible government in 1938, the working class had effectively used general strike, a weapon characteristic of that class. As the strike helped the agitation for responsible government, the agitation in turn helped the growth of the working class. In Travancore the Communist Party was born in the background in which democratic struggles of the people and the independent workers' struggles were helping and relying on each other. Consequently, the Communist Party in Travancore was the political party of the working class as well as the vanguard of the democratic movement in the full sense.

That was not the position in Hyderabad. True, there was a kind of trade union developed in the capital city of Hyderabad and there were militant strikes immediately before the beginning of the Telangana struggle. But the Communist Party had no influence in the trade union movement to any considerable extent. The main strongholds of the party were in the rural areas and that, too, in the Telugu speaking Telangana region. Although there were democratic movements against the princely rule in the Marathi and Kannada speaking region in the state, these movements were under bourgeois leadership. The influence of the Communist Party was weak in these

movements. Thus, the Party in Hyderabad was confined to the Telugu speaking region of Telangana relying mainly on the peasantry. The peasant unions and the Andhra Mahasabha were the mass organisations involved in the Telangana struggle.

The distinction between Travancore and Telangana in regard to the class relations that had existed amongst the people and the mass base of the Communist Party may be found reflected in the nature and development of the Punnapra-Vayalar and Telangana struggles. The coir workers in the Ambalappuzha and Cherthala taluks with a fighting tradition of over a decade and their fighting organisations together with the repressive actions taken by the rulers to suppress the workers constituted the political background which led to Punnapra-Vayalar struggle. In Hyderabad, on the other hand, the discontent of the Telugu speaking peasantry towards the feudal elements, called the Deshmukhs, and the aspirations of the Andhra nationality led to the Telangana struggle.

Although the workers in Alleppey and the Communist Party in the whole of Kerala had taken part in the mass upsurge against the feudal *-janmi* elements in the Ambalappuzha-Cherthala talukas only weeks before the outbreak of the Punnapra-Vayalar struggle, the Communist Party there could not rise to the position of the leader of the peasant masses. (In Kerala, the peasant movement emerged and peasant struggles fought in the erstwhile Malabar district of Madras and its influence did not extend to Travancore.) In contrast to this, the working class had no direct role in the Telangana movement, although the Communist movement there, like elsewhere, was based on working class ideologies and outlook.

There was also a difference in the course of these two struggles. The Punnapra-Vayalar struggle developed rapidly into a conflict between the armed volunteers of the working class and the state army and got suppressed—all in a matter of a few weeks. The Telangana struggle, on the other hand, was a peasant revolutionary struggle lasting for about five years during which more than 4000 Communists and peasant activists were killed and over 10,000 Communists and workers of mass movements were thrown behind the bars for long periods. As a result of this long drawn out struggle, "Gram Raj" was established in 3000 villages covering an area of

10,000 square miles with a population of about three million. The people's organizations and the volunteer force seized about a million acres of land from the landlords and distributed them among the peasants. Minimum wage of agricultural workers was fixed and they were liberated from the social feudal oppressions. Such a long drawn out revolutionary movements with far-reaching effects of this kind had never taken place anywhere in India before. What was expressed in these two struggles was the efforts made by the princely rulers of these states to sustain their autocratic rule in the background of the negotiations on the future constitution being carried on by the leaders of the Congress and the League and the protests of the democratic minded people against these efforts. Consequently, the the impact of the Punnapra-Vayalar struggle remained in the politics of Travancore even after it was suppressed. Although the armed conflict had ended, the democratic minded people in the state, inspired by the struggle, continued their political struggles raising the slogans of "End the Dewan Rule", "Dump Independent Travancore and the American Model in the Arabian Sea", etc. Until the rulers, isolated from the people, retraced their steps, the politics of Punnapra-Vayalar remained relevant in the state.

The rulers of Hyderabad held on for about another year after the establishment of a responsible government in Travancore. Finally, the Indian army had to intervene to force the rulers to surrender, following which Hyderabad joined the Indian Union and a responsible government established there. The political situation changed after these developments. As the bourgeois democrats withdrew their support to the movement following these developments, the Telangana movement lost the popular support of an important section which had remained behind the movement until the surrender of the Nizam.

From this brief description it will be clear that Punnapra-Vayalar and the Telangana struggles formed an integral part of the post-war revolutionary upsurge in India. Therefore, as the Indian political situation which formed the basis of this revolutionary upsurge underwent a fundamental change with the establishment of a bourgeois democratic system at the Centre and in the provinces including the princely states, the political base of these struggles disappeared.



Since the Communist Party had been playing a leading role in both these struggles, the march to the revolutionary future as visualized by the Party became more unhindered. The bourgeois parliamentary election held after these two struggles demonstrated the premier position of the Communist Party in the Andhra districts including the Telangana region and in the districts of Kerala including the Ambalappuzha-Cherthala taluks. It became clear that the Communist Party was one of the foremost political parties that emerged in the post-independent Indian political scene.

We have explained earlier the circumstance which led to the suppression of the Naval mutiny of February 1946. The same can be applied to the Punnapra-Vayalar and Telangana struggles as well. The different streams of people's actions and feelings like the discontent among the ranks of the British Indian armed forces, the wide spread workers strikes and peasant struggles of 1945-46, the agitations of the people in the princely states throughout the length and breadth of the country and the preparedness of the people to carry on armed struggles as witnessed in the Punnapra-Vayalar and in Telangana—each of these streams passed through little channels and finally petered out, rather than joining together to make up a mighty turbulent river of revolution. Each of these struggles was isolated and suppressed as and when it occurred.

The Leftist parties including the Communist Party were not strong enough to unify them and convert them into a single unified revolutionary upsurge. The bourgeois leadership of the independence movement, on the other hand, adopted the course of bargain and compromise, instead of revolutionary struggles. The result? The British rulers could convert the popular feelings into Hindu-Muslim riots.



# APPENDIX



*Appendix (i)*

## **Report Of CKC Commission On Telangana**

A resolution on the concentration camps in Telangana, passed at the extended meeting of the Central Kisan Council of the All India Kisan Sabha held at Madras on 23 and 26 August 1952, condemned the barbarous treatment meted out to the tribal peasantry who had fought heroically against inhuman exploitation and oppression, and demanded of the Hyderabad government (i) the abolition of the so-called rehabilitation camps, withdrawal of the military and S.A.P. from the tribal belt and freedom for the people to go back to their ancestral homes; (ii) giving such monetary and other help to these tribal people as would assist them in rehabilitating themselves and their agriculture; (iii) amendment of the forest laws so as to allow the peasantry to use forest products free; and (iv) the provision of schools, hospitals and wells and such other amenities as would materially and culturally develop the tribal people so far left in extreme backwardness.

The council, moreover, appointed a commission with Comrades M.A. Rasul, convener (W.Bengal), N. Prasada Rao (Telangana), Wadhawa Ram and Mohan Singh (Punjab) as members to visit the oppressed people of Telangana on a goodwill mission to them to investigate their present conditions and report back to the Council.

The commission accordingly visited Telangana early in September 1952 accompanied by three more comrades—Comrades E.P. Gopalan (Malabar), Dinkar Mehta (Gujarat) and Pranesh Biswas (Assam)

### **Koya Tribe**

They all went deep into the forest in Mulug taluk of Warangal district, Hyderabad state, and met the people in the following villages: Vaddigudem, kodisela, Bandala and Karlapalli. All the

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*Taken from : "A History of the All India Kisan Sabha" written by M.A.Rasul.*

villages are inhabited by people of the Koya tribe which has a population of about three lakhs in the state. They are scattered in small hamlets all over the forest which is generally known as the Agency Forest. The forest is about 200 miles in length and 30 to 60 miles in width, covering parts of Warangal, Adilabad, Karimnagar and Mahbubnagar districts of Hyderabad state and spreading up to the Godavari river in Andhra. The commission also visited the concentration camp at Pasra, one of those camps which are euphemistically called rural welfare centres or rehabilitation camps.

We collected our facts from the villagers themselves. Whether they were in their old villages or in the concentration camps, we visited them. Facts of police oppression and torture could be multiplied ad infinitum but we give only a few in this report.

The first village we entered was Vaddigudem. As soon as the people learnt that we had come from the Kisan Sabha they gathered around us and began to tell us their tale of woe. Pulakka, a woman of about 40, showed us pieces of bones of her mother Buchakka who had been burnt alive in her house by the police and the military. This happened early in 1951 when all the houses in the village were burnt down and the villagers along with their cattle were arrested and taken away to the Pasra concentration camp. These people left the camp only in May 1952.

Later we saw the other villages where also all the houses were burnt down by the police and military forces of government and the people were arrested and taken to the concentration camp.

### **The Background**

During the days of Razakar oppression Razakars generally resorted to looting the houses of the peasants in Telangana and the latter resisted them. When, however, the so-called police action took place, the police and the military forces of the government became more oppressive to the people in that they not only looted their property but also committed murder, arson and rape. When the people resisted they were subjected to all methods of torture and repression. As the resistance movement grew and spread wider and wider, government assumed a more

and more revengeful and barbarous attitude. Concentration camps were started to keep the people in them under police control as they were suspected of giving aid to the anti-feudal peasant struggle.

### **Life in Concentration Camps**

In Mulug taluk these camps were first opened towards the end of 1949. At first 23 camps were opened with a police force varying in strength from 1,000 to 7,000 to guard them in the jungle areas of Mulug, Pakhal and Mankota taluks of Warangal district. In some places the people were removed to the concentration camps just before the harvesting time for jawar, the main crop.

The armed forces employed by the government generally consisted of Rajputs, Sikhs, Gurkhas and Jats and also the Mysore armed police and the Madras armed police. The Mysore armed police were the most brutal of these and have since been absorbed in the Hyderabad state armed police.

The entire population of the forest areas of the whole of Warangal district, about three lakhs in number, was taken into the concentration camps. Some of these people were taken far away from their villages. For instance, the people of Pungonda were taken to Ashoknagar camp in Mulug taluk 25 miles away. The people of Lingala Dabbagudem and Marrigudem were taken 30 to 40 miles away to the Jakaram camp.

The concentration camps had no readymade houses in them for the villagers to live in. In many of the camps such as Ashoknagar the people had first to live under trees since government did not even allow them to build houses for themselves. It was after several months that they were permitted to procure bamboos and logs from the forest to build huts.

In the first year of camp life only one-fourth acre of land was allotted to each family irrespective of its size, for which 50 per cent share of crop had to be given to the landlords as rent. One of the landlords in Ashoknagar, Mahbub Reddy owned over 30 villages and rented out land to the people in the camps. But so far he is reported to have given them no pattas.

## **Hard Life**

Government gave the jungle lands without rent but the jungle had to be cleared. The tenants had to pay Rs.30 per acre for clearing the jungle with a bulldozer and Rs.15 per acre for ploughing the land with a tractor. Thus hardly anything would be left to the cultivators out of the produce of the land.

Generally these people of the jungle can live on their crops for six months or so after which they have to look for roots and tubers procured from the forest. But that happened when their life was free and they lived in small hamlets. In the concentration camps they lost that freedom and were not allowed to go out more than three or four furlongs away from the camps and by no means far into the jungles. Hence they were unable to procure roots and tubers so necessary for their livelihood. They were not even allowed to graze their cattle in the forest which largely accounted for the heavy mortality of their cattle ranging from 30 to 60 per cent.

In this life of extreme hardship government gave them 1.25 seers of husked grain—maize or jawar—per family per week for which they had to pay one rupee. And few had money to buy this scanty ration at all. Besides, they often had to walk far to get the ration which therefore many could not have. So it went into the hands of the police for blackmarketing.

## **Order of Release**

In this situation most people began to leave their camps surreptitiously but were again arrested and brought back to the camps. Only those who went away far into the jungles were saved. It was only in May 1952 that an official communique was issued to the press that the people living in the northern camps might leave their camps but this did not operate so far as the southern camps were concerned. However, they also had been already left by most of their inmates.

It is true that at present there are no more raids and arrests and the people have come back to their respective villages, both from the northern and southern camps, and begun to construct huts for living. Only a small percentage of the people still live in



the camps in order to look after their crops there. Nevertheless those who have gone back home, even from the northern camps, are in terror lest there should be raids and arrests again, and therefore they are often chary of putting in labour for completing their house-building.

In the first six months the concentration camps had no housing and food rationing arrangements nor was any medical aid available in them at any time. This even the jungle tribes who had been for generations accustomed to hard life could not stand for a long time. So epidemics broke out and hundreds died. In the Pasra and Chelvai camps in Mulug taluk about 300 people died in these six months. In the Gundala camp as many as 480 died out of a total of about 1,500 souls brought from 22 villages. In the Bayyaram, Gudur, Apparajpalli and Karepalli camps 900 people died. And those who died were mostly children and old people.

### **Starvation and Epidemics**

Starvation and ill-nourishment were responsible for the death of many people even after their return to the villages. For instance, two weavers (scheduled caste) families died in Bandala village (Mulug). Out of the five families of Pusapuram village all died but one man. The village does not exist now. Out of 11 families of Sailendu village three were completely finished while eight out of 28 families of Chimmagudem village in Palwancha taluk met the same fate.

In almost all camps cholera and small-pox broke out in an epidemic form and no medical aid was given there.

Cattle are practically the only property owned by these forest people who along with their cattle were driven into the concentration camps. Like that of the people of mortality of their cattle was also heavy. This was partly due to want of fodder which resulted from the concentration of too many cattle. A few figures will illustrate this point. In Pakhal Taluk (Warangal district) Gurizelamodu (village and camp) had 242 heads of cattle in it when the camp life began there and of these 98 died during the camp life. The respective figures for the following villages were: Potlabooti 110 and 34; Punugonda 398 and 161; Ramaram

222 and 113; and Euraram 122 and 66. The other cattle had to be sold by their owners for cash to pay rent and other dues so that their agricultural operation and milk supply suffered badly.

### **Burning of Villages**

In these forests the villages, mainly inhabited by the Koya tribe, consist generally of four or five to 50 houses each. Some of the villages burnt down by the police and military were : in Pakhal taluk—Punugonda and Mamaram; in Mulug taluk—Bandala, Pusapuram, Narsapuram (two villages of the same name), Alligudem, Vollepalli, Lingala, Dabbagudem, Mamigudem, Karnapalli, Saidelu, Ankampalli, Vaddigudem, Karlapalli, Kodisela and Rampuram.

One of these villages, Kodisela had 22 huts which were all reduced to ashes. All the people were taken to Pasra concentration camp except only five families who could not be traced. Of these people 12 died of small-pox in the camp. Since their return from the camp they have so far erected 12 new huts which they have not completed for fear of being taken to the camp again.

In September and October 1950 when crops were ready of harvesting the villages were destroyed and crops ruined. This was a terrible loss to the people. But not only crops, thousands of head of cattle were also destroyed by burning. Besides, on return from the camps the people find their lands overgrown with bushes, thus ruining their agriculture. So they have to starve.

### **Physical Torture**

Early in 1949 police were sent to the forest where they set up camps to quell the anti-feudal movement of the peasants most of whom belonged to the heroic Koya tribe. The police caught the common villagers, beat them up till they bled and put chile-powder in their cuts. In Mattewada village of Pakhal taluk eight people were forcibly laid down on scorching sand and tortured without food till they succumbed to death. In Kottunguda village of Illendu taluk two Koya men were tortured to death. In Karepalli village of the same taluk the whole village was taken out and made to stand with bent back from 5 a.m. to 7 a.m. When one of

the men, unable to stand thus, straightened himself a stick was pushed through his anus and he died. In Kodisela village (Mulug) Lachchaya, a Koya, was burnt all over his body with burning cigarette ends. Suriah of the same village said his father and another, Narasimhulu, were shot dead when they had gone back to their village to gather their crop.

Towards the end of 1949, in Karepalli camp the people were tied together by their hands, young and old men and women, and were ordered to run fast which all could not do at equal speed. Those who lagged behind were beaten hard. A 16 year old girl fell down and was trampled over and crushed to death. The people of the same camp were ordered to run over the stones on the railway line. Those who refused to do so were beaten. In Devalgudem village in Palwancha taluk four men were tortured and killed while in Chembrudugudem village several others were murdered.

### **Burning to Death**

In Alapalli village in Palwancha taluk a man and his wife went to the market. The police caught the woman and kept her in their camp while they shot her husband dead. Many people were buried alive—119 people including over 30 women in the Alapalli camp. Many others were caught and burning grass was heaped on their heads which caused their death. Many others still were brought out from jail and burnt alive. From Apparajpalli camp in Mankota taluk 60 people were brought out and shot dead.

Sometimes houses were closed on the outside and set fire to without warning so that anybody remaining inside would be burnt alive. A woman was thus killed in Vaddigudem and another in Sampalli village. In Chimalagudem village (Mulug) a baby was thus burnt alive. A woman was also killed in Alligudem village.

As a method of extracting information about the peasant struggle then going on, the police dug holes in many camps into which some people were thrown. The holes were then covered at the top airtight with planks. In this way two men were suffocated to death in Gundala camp. This method of torture was repeated, bringing death to many people.

Narsayya, a man of 50, of Chintalapadu village (Palwancha) had his clothes soaked by the police in kerosene and then set fire to. He, however escaped death. Ramulu and his mother Narsamma of the same village were thrown into a camp hole and tortured. The police put chile powder into the private parts of the woman. They are still living but their health is shattered and they have lost their ability to work. In Venkatapuram (Palwancha) one Balayya was tortured for three days on end and succumbed.

Another Narsayya (25) of village Narsapuram who was in Gundala camp was repeatedly thrown into fire but escaped at the time. Eventually, however, he died without giving any information to the police.

When Karlavoy village in Pakhal taluk was surrounded by the police they caught an old man of 65 and hanged him, while a small boy of eight or nine years was caught and shot dead. In Narsapuram village six men were shot dead, in Gangaram five and in Venkatapuram seven.

### **Rape and Torture of Women**

In Apparajpalli camp in Mankota taluk many women were raped by the police. Four women including Manigini, sister of Jethia, a Lombadi (tribal) were killed there. A girl of Kalal tribe from village Tilegini in Mankota taluk was raped and then buried alive. In Nireda village in the same taluk 30 women were publicly raped in the presence of their fathers, brothers and husbands.

In Apparajapalli village a big landlord used to raid villages with the help of the police. He caught and married many women including those already married, and raped others. Two such women, unable to bear the shame committed suicide. A shepherd woman, Ramakka, was caught by the landlord and the police but she escaped. She was again caught and raped by several policemen as a result of which she died. In punugonda six women were raped and four others beaten and killed by the police.

Many unmarried and widowed young women were forcibly married to others by landlords and the police. The reason was that during their struggle such women felt a sense of freedom

and preferred to marry according to their own choice which the upholders of reaction would not tolerate.

The wife of Abilayya of punugonda village was taken away by the police. She is still untraced. Her husband was caught in the forest by the police and killed. Muttays's wife, a Koya woman was similarly captured by the police. She has just escaped and come out with shattered health. Similarly also were taken away Lakshmamma, wife of Swami and Suramma, wife of Samgham.

A Lombadi women, just after childbirth, was raped successively by 12 men. In many villages wholesale rape of women was committed by the police. When the people of such villages are asked if there had been any cases of rape, they simply answer, What to say? In sampalli village Samamma, Bachamma and others and Chimamma of Chemburgudem village, all tribal women, were raped collectively.

### **Concentration Camps Today**

The Commission visited one of the concentration camps in Pasra "Rural Welfare Centre" in Mulug taluk. In this camp at first there were over 200 families consisting of 500 people brought from nearby villages. At present only a few families remain. They are afraid of leaving the camp lest they should be brought back and tortured.

The homestead given to each famliiy is about one-twentieth acre. For building their houses government granted Rs.5 per a family.

They were later allowed to cultivate the land which they generally used to cultivate before being brought to the camp. Some agricultural loan was given to them at 9 per cent interest repayable in five instalments over two years. For the land they have to pay Rs. 1-12-0 (1.75) as rent to the landlord to whom it belongs and to government Rs. 6-4-0 (6.25) as irrigation charges. Only one crop, paddy grows on the land and the yield 6 to 10 toom ( 1 toom is about equal to 1 maund) per acre.

As for other charges payable by the people in the camp, one is landlord's rent for grazing cattle which is one rupee per buffalo; there is no charge for other cattle, This year, unlike before, one

can bring fuel wood from the jungles at three annas per headload provided one has secured a permit for the purpose. For each plough (to be made) they have to pay Rs. 2 and 12 seers of paddy for the wood. The charges are payable in advance.

There is no police camp attached to the Pasra camp but there is one at Chelvai, four miles from Pasra, where there is also a concentration camp. From Chelvai police camp the police visit the Pasra camp from time to time and force the people there to carry there loads without payment.

### **Taxes and Exactions**

The peasants of Telangana and particularly those who live in the forest are subjected to all sorts of brutal exploitation. Forced labour and other exactions are rampant. Various "taxes" are levied on them by forest contractors, village officials forest officials, policemen etc. These taxes and exactions existed not only under the feudal rule of the Nizam but do exist also today when Congress rule has been established, whether they are officially sanctioned or not.

Some of these taxes are follows : Poll tax is imposed on all men, women and children at the rate of eight annas per head per annum. In the case of women, shamelessly enough, this tax is called the breast tax. Failure to pay this tax invites torture, confiscation of property, etc.

Tax on broom grass, collected by a forest contractor, is one rupee per family. Re. 1 to Rs. 1-4-0 (1.25) per family on grass to make string which is used to make a cot. On grass for thatching houses Rs. 5 and hen for each house. On *mahua* seeds which are crushed for oil the tax is from 4 annas (0.25) to one rupee, and on *mahua* flower, used to prepare drink, rupee one to Rs. 1-8-0 (1.50) per family.

Several taxes are levied on bamboo for various uses. One rupee for each pole of a *machan* (scaffolding raised to support creepers; Rs.5 and a *vis* (1.5 seers) of ghee for the fencing of one cattle-pen; separate taxes for house construction and for bamboo canes. Similarly about wood procured from the forest Rs. 7 per plough and one rupee for each pounding club.

If anybody is attacked by a wild beast and kills it in self-defence, even then he is fined and the amount of fine is Rs.50!

The taxes and illegal collections goes to the police patel, the village police official. During the struggle in Telangana these officials fled their villages, fully conscious of the sentiments of the people oppressed by them. Now, however, they have come back but are not yet able to resume their old methods of exploitation on account of strong popular resistance.

Lands still under cultivation are in possession of the peasants. They want pattas (title deeds) which government refuses to give them. In Mulug taluk 7,000 acres were cleared by the people from jungle lands in 1950-1952. They cultivated these lands but have no formal possession yet.

Such a position of the actual cultivators cannot improve the food situation which is already acute and is further worsening. Agriculture has been largely ruined. The people are starving. In August last nine cases of starvation death were reported from five villages in Mulug taluk—Samgampalli, Kotturu, Ramanakkapeta, Kannayagudem and Rajapeta. So the people eat whatever they get, even white *chenna*, a poisonous root which they eat after prolonged and repeated washing and boiling. Government grain shops are urgently needed. Moreover, epidemics recently took a heavy toll of cattle in the Mangalapeta area so that agricultural operations were hampered there.

### **Situation grave**

All these facts only show that neither the so-called police action nor the government of India nor the newly forged Congress rule of Hyderabad has resulted in any progressive step in the state being taken. Indeed the old feudal set-up of Nizamshahi still dominates the countryside of Telangana with perhaps a little change in the name or form, while Congress rule only preserves it.

This situation is further aggravated by the repressive policy of the Hyderabad government which will still keeps in jail as many as 553 political detenues and about 2,000 others as political convicts and under trials.

Concentration camps also still exist in Warangal district of Telangana. Altogether there are about 50 such camps—12 in

Mulug taluk, 19 in Illendu taluk, and about 19 in other parts. Also there are seven police camps in Mulug taluk.

### **The Remedy**

In order to improve the present situation certain urgent measures should be immediately adopted by the government of Hyderabad by way of minimum relief that can be administered to the Koya and other peasants who live in the forest areas. These demands of course are other than the basic demands such as giving land to the tiller free of charge. The immediate demands of these people are:

- 1) Full freedom to leave the concentration camps and go home.
- 2) Lump sum grant for constructing new houses.
- 3) Freedom to use forest products.
- 4) Gratuitous food relief till new harvest.
- 5) Ordinance or law making all illegal exactions a cognizable offence.
- 6) Pattas to be given for all *podu* or jungle clearing lands for the period up to their being taken to the concentration camps, and the people to be allowed to get land for clearing jungle for cultivation.
- 7) Tenancy certificate guaranteeing occupancy right for all lands occupied by the people in the jungle areas.
- 8) Release of all detenus and convicts, withdrawal of all pending warrants and all cases against undertrials, and abolition of all concentration camps ("rural welfare centres") and police camps.

Signed : M. A. Rasul,  
N. Prasada Rao,  
Wadhwa Ram,  
Mohan Singh.

Members of the Commission  
27 September 1952.



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